

# Sacrilege

versus

## Civility

Muslim Perspectives on The Satanic Verses Affair

Edited by M.M. Ahsan and A.R. <u>Kidwai</u>

The Islamic Foundation

THE DOTTON

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The Arabic calligraphy on the title cover refers to the Our'anic verse 'And We have exalted your (the Prophet's) fame' – Al Sharh 94:4.

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# Preface to the Second Edition

It is our great pleasure to bring out the enlarged, up-to-date second edition of Sacrilege Versus Civility. To our utmost gratification, the first edition succeeded in its intended effect – representing fully the Muslim case about the issue that has profoundly affected the Muslim

community, particularly British Muslims.

Since the publication of The Satanic Verses, the UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs (UKACIA) has been consistently campaigning against sacrilege and working for suitable legislation to prevent the recurrence of offences against Islamic sanctities. In order to record the UKACIA's laudable efforts in this regard, we have included in this edition some of the UKACIA press releases in Appendix IV and extracts from the UKACIA Memorandum, 'Muslims and the Law in Multi-faith Britain - The Need for Reform' (June 1993) to the Home Secretary for the consideration of the Second Review of Race Relations Act 1976. Moreover, all the relevant events and published material of the period between the first edition (July 1991) and this second edition (June 1993) have been incorporated by way of updating the Chronology, Chapters I-V and Annotated Bibliography, Particularly, the most substantial additions have been to Chapter V 'The Muslim Argument'. The inclusion of the new material will help the readers relate the Affair to a wider, broader perspective.

It is our pleasant duty to thank Muslim organizations, mosques and institutions in Britain for their invaluable help and Mr. Iqbal Sacranie, Joint Convenor UKACIA, in particular, for helping us in many ways. Last, though not least, we are grateful to the readers of the first edition for their comments and their encouragement.

Leicester, June 1993 CE Muharram 1414 H

**Editors** 

## Preface to the First Edition

This book is an attempt to place the Satanic Verses Affair in the Muslim perspective with sidelights on the variety of responses it evoked. A spate of books have already been published on the Affair, as is evident from our fairly long Bibliography. We nevertheless felt the need for an updated work documenting and analysing the Affair as Muslims see it. For, the coverage in the books published so far stops at mid- or late-1989. We, therefore planned it for publication in early 1991. This plan proved, in a sense, providential in that it enabled us to cover a significant 'twist' in the Affair - Rushdie's 'embracing' of Islam on the 24th December, 1990. We believe the discussion on this latest, unpredictable and ambivalent aspect of the Affair should make this book stand out above others. Seeking permission to reproduce some extracts, particularly from national dailies, revealed to us the other face of the much-vaunted ideal of the freedom of expression. The very champions of this freedom who had supported Rushdie with all their might in presenting a sheer distortion of Islam literally prevented us from even representing what had been published day in and day out in their newspapers and magazines. Hardly had we expected such 'thou shall not-ism' of the Liberal establishment.

This book emanates from our belief in the primacy of civility over sacrilege. To our dismay and bewilderment, we noted the voice of civility being stifled in the din and furore engendered by the literati, liberals, secularists, racists and media, each contributing its part. With passions calming down and the restoration of some semblance of sanity and reason, particularly in the media, we believe it is now time to listen and respond to the voice of civility.

The detailed Chronology provides a synoptic account of almost all relevant events. Chapter 1, 'The Muslim Perspective', offers a dense, coherent treatment of the Affair, ranging from the sacrilegious contents of The Satanic Verses, the Muslim response including the fatwa, to Rushdie's reported conversion to Islam. Chapter 2 recapitulates Rushdie's own postures on the genesis and design of The Satanic Verses, apart from a piece full of insights into his mind. In the fierce battle between sacrilege and civility there were voices of all sorts - hysterical and abusive as well as sane and rational. With a view to recording such material in the broader context of the West vis-a-vis Islam/Muslims, a selection of writings, mostly extracts, is presented in Chapters 3 and 4 entitled 'In Defence of Sacrilege' and 'Voices of Civility' respectively. As already indicated, the original plan was to include a fairly large selection of such material, particularly in Chapter 3. However, the refusal of copyright permission forced us to drop several pieces. What was published elsewhere without any qualms was deemed unsuitable for reproduction in our book by the custodians of free speech! Had this material been so 'hot' it should not have been published in the first place.

The discussion broached in Chapter 1 is resumed and elaborated by several writers in Chapter 5, 'The Muslim Argument'. It reflects the depth, range and passion of the Muslim response to the sacrilege embodied in Rushdie's work. We have tried our best to avoid the repetition of any argument but being a collection of articles some overlapping was inevitable in this Chapter. Appended to the book are several significant documents with bearings on the Affair. Another useful element of the book is an extensive and annotated bibliography of relevant material in books and journals. For obvious constraints of space we had to exclude from the Bibliography the plethora of material on the Affair in national dailies, of which some extracts are, however, quoted in Chapters 3 and 4.

Though some of the extracts reproduced in the book did require language editing, we have quoted them verbatim. The headings of excerpts in italic are our own, while the original heading is specified in the source

We hope this book will help appreciate better the Muslim position on the Affair, which far from betraying any 'militancy' or 'fundamentalism' consists in their preference for civility over sacrilege.

Several colleagues and friends helped us in preparing this book, to whom we are extremely grateful for comments and suggestions.

#### Sacrilege versus Civility

It is impossible to mention them all by name. However, we would like to record our thanks to Mr. M.H. Faruqi for going through part of the manuscript and giving invaluable suggestions for improvements. We are also grateful to Muslim and non-Muslim friends for allowing us to reproduce their writing in part or full. Our thanks are also due to Mr. Zaheeruddin, President, ICNA, New York, Mrs. Motaharunnisa Omar, Madras (India), Mr. Ekramul Haque, former editor of *The Message*, USA and Mr. Iqbal Sacranie, Joint Convenor, UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs, for providing us with useful material. Mrs. K. Barratt and Mr. E.R. Fox deserve our special thanks for respectively typing the manuscript and seeing the book through the press.

Leicester, June 1991 **Editors** 

## Chronology

26th September, 1988

Viking/Penguin, London, publish Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* despite its own Editorial Consultant, Mr. Khushwant Singh's repeated warning that it would cause offence to Muslims.

3rd October, 1988

Objectionable passages from the book brought to the attention of Muslim organizations, mosques, and Muslim ambassadors in the UK. Penguin officials contacted for immediate withdrawal of this offensive work.

3rd-10th October, 1988 Thousands of letters and phone calls to the publisher demanding that the offensive work be withdrawn. The publisher does not reply.

5th October, 1988

The Government of India takes the lead in banning *The Satanic Verses*.

11th October, 1988

The UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs, representing major Muslim organizations, mosques and scholars in the UK, formed in London in order to mobilize public opinion against this sacrilegious and unwarranted attack on the Islamic sanctities.

The Riyadh-based World Assembly of

|                     |  |                           | Chronology   |
|---------------------|--|---------------------------|--|
|                     | Muslim Youth, representing over 500 Muslim youth organizations the world   | 14th December, 1988       | Sri Lanka bans The Satanic Verses.   |
|                     | over, condemns the offensive book and demands a world ban.   | 19th December, 1988       | A delegation of Muslim ambassadors in London call on the British Home Mini-  |
| 21st October, 1988  | Hundreds of thousands of Muslims sign the petition protesting against the publi-   |                           | ster to protest against The Satanic Verses.  |
|                     | cation of <i>The Satanic Verses</i> , and calling for its withdrawal. Again, the publisher pays no heed to the Muslims' demand.  | 23rd December, 1988       | The British Attorney General gives the official legal opinion that British law precluded any action against the publisher.   |
| 5th November, 1988  | The 46-nation Organization of the Islamic Conference General Secretariat asks member states to take strong action  | 28th December, 1988       | Oman blacklists Penguin, the publisher in accordance with the OIC resolution.  |
|                     | against the publisher and the author if they fail to withdraw the work.  | December, 1988<br>onwards | Massive protest rallies in every British town with a sizeable Muslim population in protest against the publication of the  |
|                     | Bangladesh bans The Satanic Verses.  |                           | blasphemous book.  |
| 21st November, 1988 | Al-Azhar, the 1,000-year-old most venerated Islamic seminary in Egypt, brands <i>The Satanic Verses</i> as blasphemous and calls on the 45 Muslim                                | 14th January, 1989        | Muslims in Bradford, Yorkshire (UK) burn symbolically a copy of <i>The Satanic Verses</i> in order to draw attention to their long unacknowledged protest against  |
| and November, 1988  | countries to take concerted action.  Sudan bans The Satanic Verses.  |                           | the blasphemous book. The media picks on the event without any concern for the anguish suffered by the Muslims.  |
| 24th November, 1988 | South Africa bans The Satanic Verses in response to the South African Muslims' protest.  | 16th January, 1989        | W.H. Smith, Britain's biggest book-<br>seller, withdraws <i>The Satanic Verses</i><br>from sale in its shops.  |
| 1st December, 1988  | Mr. Ken Hargreaves, MP, moves an Early Day Motion in the House of Commons, regretting the distress caused to Muslims in the UK by the publication of <i>The Satanic Verses</i> . | 1st February, 1989        | Mr. Douglas Hurd, the British Home<br>Secretary, addressing a Muslim gather-<br>ing in Birmingham, rules out any change<br>in the blasphemy law and instead asks<br>the British Muslims to join 'the main-<br>stream'. |
| 10th December, 1988 | A massive protest rally in London organized by the Islamic Defence Council against the publication of <i>The Satanic Verses</i> .  | 12th February, 1989       | Ten peaceful Muslim protesters in Islamabad (Pakistan) shot dead by the Pakistan police outside the US Embassy.  |

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|                     | · ·  |        |
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|                     | Public demonstrations against the book held in almost all major towns in Pakistan.                                       | 26th F |
| 13th February, 1989 | Five Muslim protesters killed and others injured in Srinagar, Kashmir, India.  | 27th F |
| 14th February, 1989 | Ayatollah Khomeini proclaims that Salman Rushdie, being an apostate, deserves the death penalty.                         |        |
|                     | serves the death penalty.  | 1st Ma |
| 15th February, 1989 | Big demonstrations outside the British<br>Embassy in Tehran. Iran blacklists all<br>Penguin/Viking publications. Rushdie | 3rd M  |
|                     | goes into hiding.  |        |
| 18th February, 1989 | Rushdie issues a non-apology purport-  |        |
| Tour February, 1969 | ing to say that 'Muslims in many parts of  |        |
|                     | the world are genuinely distressed by  |        |
|                     | the publication of The Satanic Verses.'  |        |
|                     | Yet there is no word about the with-<br>drawal of the offensive book.  |        |
| 21st February, 1989 | Iran withdraws ambassadors from the EEC countries.   | 4th Ma |
|                     |  | 7th Ma |
| 23rd February, 1989 | WCXR-FM, a radio station outside<br>Washington, DC withdraws albums by   |        |
|                     | Yusuf Islam, the former pop singer, and decides not to play them in future for Yusuf Islam's condemnation of <i>The</i>  | 13th M |
|                     | Satanic Verses.  | 14th M |
|                     | Cardinal Albert Decourtray, Head of  | 141111 |
|                     | the French Roman Catholic Church,  | 16th M |
|                     | remarks on the publication of The  |        |
|                     | Satanic Verses: 'Once again believers have been offended in their faith.'  |        |
| 24th February, 1989 | Bombay police open fire on a peaceful Muslim procession, killing at least 13.  |        |
|                     | masim procession, kinning at least 13.   |        |

#### Chronology

| Thousands of American Muslims protest in New York against the publication of <i>The Satanic Verses</i> .  |
|---|
| A British Muslim delegation calls on Mr. John Patten, Minister of State, Home Office. He, however, rejects the Muslims' plea for equal treatment for all faiths under the blasphemy law.              |
| Kenya bans The Satanic Verses.  |
| More than 10,000 Muslims stage a rally against <i>The Satanic Verses</i> in Dhaka (Bangladesh). About 100 people injured when the police open fire on the procession.                                 |
| Mrs. Thatcher, the British Prime Minister and Sir Geoffrey Howe, the Foreign Secretary, concede that <i>The Satanic Verses</i> is 'offensive'.  |
| A big protest rally against <i>The Satanic Verses</i> in Istanbul, Turkey.  |
| Thailand bans The Satanic Verses.   |
| Iran severs diplomatic ties with the UK.  |
| Tanzania bans The Satanic Verses.   |
| Indonesia bans The Satanic Verses.  |
| Singapore bans The Satanic Verses.  |
| The Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) in Riyadh (Saudi Arabia) resolves to ban Penguin publications in 45 Muslim countries in protest at the company's refusal to withdraw the offensive book. |
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|--|---|----------------------|---|
| 17th March, 1989   | A massive demonstration by the Sudan-<br>esc Muslims in Khartoum against <i>The</i><br>Satanic Verses.  | 4th July, 1989       | Mr. John Patten, British Minister of<br>State at the Home Office, writes to in-<br>fluential Muslims on issues confronting  |
| 22nd March, 1989   | Poland decides not to publish The Satanic Verses.   |                      | British Muslims and speaks of difficul-<br>ties and problems in extending legal<br>protection to non-Anglican sanctities.   |
| 28th March, 1989   | A delegation of Tehrik Tahaffuzi-<br>Namoos-i-Risalat, Action Committee in<br>Pakistan against <i>The Satanic Verses</i>  | 28th July, 1989      | The French edition of <i>The Satanic Verses</i> is published.   |
|  | presents a memorandum to the British Foreign Secretary for banning the blasphemous book.  | July, 1989           | The UK Action Committee, London, propose to launch a National Petition to the House of Commons, expressing  |
| 1st April, 1989  | The Muslim Institute, London, holds a   |                      | revulsion at The Satanic Verses.  |
|  | conference on the Rushdie Affair. In his keynote address, Dr. Kalim Siddiqui, Director, Muslim Institute, defends the fatwā and outlines the implications of the Rushdie affair for Muslims in Britain. | 1st August, 1989     | The BBC turns down the Archbishop Dr. Runcie's plea to shelve Tony Harrison's 'The Blasphemous Banquet', its programme related to <i>The Satanic Verses</i> , which attacks religious belief and is |
| 27th May, 1989   | A massive demonstration by British<br>Muslims organized by the British Muslim   |                      | particularly abusive of Iran's late leader,<br>Ayatollah Khomeini.  |
|  | Action Front in London in protest against the blasphemous book.   | 11th September, 1989 | The UMO Conference considers the continued publication of <i>The Satanic</i>  |
| 29th May, 1989   | Two Labour MPs call for withdrawal of The Satanic Verses.   |                      | Verses as the most important issue facing<br>British Muslims. Mr. Neil Thorne, Con-<br>servative MP, calls for the book to be<br>withdrawn.   |
| 15th June, 1989  | Venezuela bans The Satanic Verses.  |                      |   |
| 17th June, 1989  | The Bradford Council of Mosques charts out a 10-point action programme against the publisher and the blasphemous book.  | 30th September, 1989 | Mr. Ahmad Deedat, the South African Muslim scholar, holds a week-long British tour, campaigning for banning <i>The Satanic Verses</i> . He addresses huge meetings in Bradford, Blackburn,          |
| 20th June, 1989  | The British High Court grant the Muslim Action Front leave to challenge   |                      | Leicester, Glasgow, Birmingham and London.  |
|  | an earlier court ruling in March, refus-<br>ing to issue summonses for a private<br>prosecution.  | 20th October, 1989   | A Harris Poll conducted for BBC Television shows that four out of five British  |

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|                           | Muslims want some kind of action taken   |                     | Chronology   |
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|                           | against Rushdie.   | 5th February, 1990  | Rushdie presses Penguin/Viking to bring out the paperback edition of <i>The</i>  |
| June-October, 1989        | Protest rallies by British Muslims against  The Satanic Verses continue in UK towns.   |                     | Satanic Verses, though more than one million copies of the novel in hardback have already been sold. Of these, 740,000 were sold in the USA.   |
| 16th December, 1989       | The Association of Sunni Muslims reaffirms its determination to continue the campaign until <i>The Satanic Verses</i> is withdrawn.  | 7th February, 1990  | British Muslim leaders dismiss<br>Rushdie's Read Memorial Lecture and<br>his press statements, as 'publicity<br>stunts'.   |
|                           | Muslims at 1,000 mosques in the UK raise their hands in a 'show of solidarity' for their campaign against <i>The Satanic Verses</i> .  | 10th February, 1990 | Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's supreme leader, endorses the fatwā passed a year ago against Rushdie for his blasphemous work.  |
| 8th-12th January,<br>1990 | British Muslims representing all parts of the country conduct a 5-day vigil outside Penguin/Viking offices, London. A letter stating their demands delivered to Penguin. As in the past, Penguin refuses to consider any of these demands. | 16th February, 1990 | The UK Action Committee observes a Solidarity Day of Prayer and Dedication to the Muslim martyrs of Islamabad, Bombay and Srinagar, who sacrificed their lives in February 1989 while protesting against the publication of <i>The Satanic Verses</i> .  |
| 21st January, 1990        | A representative meeting of 200 Muslim community leaders, held in Coventry, organized by the International Muslims Organization, resolves to conduct a united campaign against the blasphemous book.                                       | 27th February, 1990 | The Council for the British Muslim Action Front argues in the London High Court for equality in law. It is pointed out also that the demonstrations against <i>The Satanic Verses</i> have already cost 30 Muslim lives in different parts of the world. |
| 3rd February, 1990        | UMO Winter Conference held in Gwent (Wales) presses for extension of the blasphemy law to cover Islam.   | 6th March, 1990     | Lord Hutchinson and Lord Harris urge prosecutions against the British Muslims for their protests over <i>The Satanic Verses</i> .  |
| 4th February, 1990        | Writing a long, malicious piece, 'In Good Faith', in <i>The Independent</i> , Rushdie claims that he has never been  | 9th April, 1990     | The Queen's Bench Divisional Court, under Section 4(1) of the Public Order   |

a Muslim.

under Section 4(1) of the Public Order Act 1986, dismisses the British Muslims'

Pengum Virtue publisher of

screling toward Civilia

The Breach Muslim Action Front seeks been to appeal to the House of Lords for protecting Islam against blasphomy.

Robbie speaking on BBC Radio 4, capresses surprise that no Muslim has been prosecuted for 'threats against him.

According to a Gallup Poll, published in The Daily Telegraph, the majority of respondents say that Rushdic should apologize.

A group of Conservative MPs call on Rushdic to compromise.

The High Court refuses British Muslims leave to appeal to the House of Lords against the judgement that the law of biaspliemy applies only to Christianity.

The Muslim Institute holds a conference in Landon on the Rushdie Affair.

The 19th Islamic Foreign Ministers Conference meeting in Cairo adopts a mandatory resolution calling on all member states to take all necessary maps including economic sanctions, against the publisher of *The Saturic Verses*, and its holding company.

In a conclintory gesture to Iran Mr. Longin Hurd the British Foreign SecChronology

retars, resterates Britain's great respect

39th September, 1990

Iran and Britain resume diplomatic links. The agreement makes no reference to Ayatollah Khomeini's fatwal against Rushdie.

30th September, 1990

In an ITV programme Rushdie speaks of his experiences during the last 18 months.

27th November, 1990

British Muslim leaders refute Rushdie's claim of his negotiations with Muslim leaders. Unless *The Satanic Verses* is withdrawn, and an unqualified apology tendered to Muslims of the world, they insist they will continue their campaign until these demands are met.

24th December, 1990

Rushdie claims to have 'embraced' Islam in the presence of the Egyptian Minister for Awqāf and some Egyptian officials. He says he will not publish the paperback edition of The Satanic Verses or permit its translation into other languages while any risk of further offence exists.

British Muslim leaders cautiously greet the reported 'conversion' of Rushdie and demand the immediate withdrawal of the hardback edition.

20th December, 1990

The Iranian supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, reaffirms the fatwā against Rushdie, stating that the fatwā pronounced by Imam Khomeini is irrevocable.

Manua who was present at Rushdie's me one with Egyptian officials refutes Rushdie's claim that the book is not a fenance. He again urges Rushdie to withdraw the hardback edition of the samplegous book.

college spream Challes

The UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs holds that Rushdie has not addressed the central issue of the total withdrawal of the offensive book and says that it is his 'religious duty' to do so in a genuine spirit of repentance for the offence caused.

In his article 'Why I have Embraced Islam' (The Times), Rushdie insists that The Satanic Verses will not be totally withdrawn for he cannot betray his readers and that it is not a deliberate insult to Islam. Once again he states that the Egyptian scholars did not regard his book as offensive.

Members of the UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs, representing major Muslim organizations, institutions and scholars, in a press conference at the Islamic Cultural Centre, London view the latest attempt by Rushdie to 'embrace' Islam as an apparent ploy to get him off the hook'. They believe that he has taken no steps to suggest that his conversion to Islam is genuine and that he offence being perpetrated through the continued publication and circulation of the sacrilegious book worldwide. They yow to continue their campaign

Chronology

until the book is totally withdrawn, an unqualified applogy tendered to the Muslims and payment of damages made to an Islamic charity.

31st December, 1990

Speaking on BBC Radio 4's Sunday Programme, Rushdie goes back on his earlier pledge, made at the time of his affirmation of Islam on 24th December, not to publish the paperback edition or further translations of *The Satanic Verses* and says that 'these would go ahead when it could happen safely'.

Rushdie claims to have received blessings from the Egyptian officials and scholars and an invitation to meet Shaikh Gad el-Haq Ali Gad el-Haq, the Grand Shaikh of al-Azhar in Cairo.

1st January, 1991

An Egyptian government spokesman refutes Rushdie's claim of having been invited to Egypt as 'absolutely without foundation'.

4th January, 1991

Francis Bennion, the author, barrister, former Oxford University law lecturer and one of the prominent members of the Committee of writers and human rights campaign supporting Salman Rushdie, dissociates himself from the novelist saying he was 'not worth defending'. Several other members of the committee such as Arnold Wesker, the playwright, are also reported to have been angry and disappointed at the reported conversion of the author to Islam and the temporary stoppage of the publication of the paperback edition of the book.

6th January, 1991

In a phone-in programme of Sunrise Radio, London, Rushdie once again insists that he would not withdraw The Satanic Verses and the book 'should remain around to be the basis of a serious analysis and discussion'. But he offers to make a contribution to the families of those killed in protest demonstrations against his sacrilegious book in 1989 'if a fund were set up'.

17th January, 1991

In an interview with Akbar S. Ahmad (The Guardian, 17th January), Rushdie once again evades the real issue of the withdrawal of the offensive book by offering three ingenious 'reasons'. He wants to meet the members of the UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs to 'talk about it'.

23rd January, 1991

Mrs. Angela Rumbold, Home Office Minister, meets the delegation of the UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs and discusses the government's move 'to find a way forward' about legal provisions for protecting religious sensitivities.

11th February, 1991

The Oxford University Press drops the plan for inclusion in a forthcoming English language teaching book, a 'too sensitive' and offensive passage from Rushdie's earlier novel, Midnight's Children.

14th February, 1991

Following the recent resumption of diplomatic relations between Iran and the UK and Rushdie's reported embracing of Islam, there was a general expectation in the West that the fatwa would be lifted on its second anniversary. The Iranian religious authorities, however, reaffirmed the fatwā.

Hitoshi Igarashi, the Japanese translator 14th July, 1991 of The Satanic Verses is stabbed to death. Ettore Capriolo, the Italian translator, survives a similar attack on 6th July.

> However, neither the motive nor the identity of the attackers has been established.

13th December, 1991

Invited by his friends, Rushdie speaks at the Columbia University, reassuring that he has no regrets about writing the novel and calls for its paperback edition.

26th March, 1992

Paperback edition of The Satanic Verses brought out by a consortium of publishers, goes on sale in Britain amid strong protest by Muslims and in spite of Rushdie's assurance to the contrary on the occasion of his 'embracing' Islam on 24th December, 1990.

10th September, 1992

In its statutory review report the Commission for Racial Equality brands the existing blasphemy law as discriminatory and calls for the offence of religious hatred to be created.

12th May, 1993

John Major, British Prime Minister, meets Rushdie amid strong protest by some Tory MPs and British Muslims.

18th June, 1993

An Istanbul prosecutor files a lawsuit against the editor of the Turkish daily Aydinlik for publishing extracts from The Satanic Verses, the import and publication of which is banned in Turkey. The court had earlier ordered the seizure of the issues of the newspaper which contained excerpts from the book, but Avdinlik had defied the court order. The prosecutor demanded a prison term totalling two and a half years.

2nd July, 1993

Some 40 people die through inhaling smoke when a protest demonstration against the presence of Aziz Nesin, the Turkish translator of the sacrilegious book in a Sivas hotel got out of control. Aziz Nesin and his friends had gathered in Sivas to pay tribute to a 16th-century heretic, Abdal Sultan, executed during the Ottoman period. Nesin was also reported to have told the meeting that 'the reign of the 1,000-year old Qur'ān is over'.

Turkish Interior Minister Mehmet Gazioglu rebuked Nesin for his 'negative and provocative statements against the government and against the faith and belief of the people'. An official spokesman said they will take legal action after studying the text of Aziz Nesin's speech.

The author of *The Satanic Verses* admitted for the first time that he was being 'used' as a pawn in a wider game. However, he called on the G-7 industrialized nations' summit in Tokyo to 'confront' 'terrorist action' against him and his book.

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#### CHAPTER 1

### The Muslim Perspective

Perhaps no other book has ever caused so much anger, fury and revulsion amongst Muslims the world over as the publication by Viking/Penguin in September 1988 of Salman Rushdie's The Satanic Verses. No other book has been used in the same way as The Satanic Verses has as a pretext to launch an attack against Islam and the Muslim community in the West. Indeed, no other book has caused so many deaths and injuries in the Muslim world as this outrageous publication. And, no book has caused so much misunderstanding and hostility against Islam in the West as The Satanic Verses. What should have been seen as a simple issue of blasphemy and profanity has been turned into a clash between Muslim and Western liberal culture. Ironically, instead of trying to understand the offence The Satanic Verses has caused to Islam and Muslims and instead of listening to authentic Muslim points of view, the entire establishment in the West, with a few exceptions, has turned against Islam and hounded the Muslim community with all its might and contempt. What should have been seen as a genuine Muslim reaction of anger and protest has been misdirected to issues of freedom of expression and censorship.

Once again the media has taken its revenge on Islam, turning the victims into criminals, the oppressed into oppressors, the innocent into the guilty. A smokescreen of confusion, vilification and malice was created in an effort to mislead the people and to scare Muslims into submission. Hardly anyone tried to understand why Muslims reacted so angrily to the book's publication, why there were so many demonstrations and protests, why more than 20 people in India and Pakistan gave their lives and scores more

sustained serious injuries, why Imam Khomeini issued the *fatwā*, why Iran broke off diplomatic relations with Britain and then had to face the indignation and hostility of the European community.

In this essay, we shall attempt to evaluate the Muslim perspective on the Rushdie affair. We shall further assess why the publication of this novel provoked the anger of the Muslim community, examine how the Muslim community launched and sustained their campaign against the book and with what consequences.

#### The British Muslim Campaign

Although several reviews appeared in leading British newspapers soon after the book's publication and the author himself explained some of its contents on the BBC Network East programme, it was not until late September that the Muslim community in Britain came to appreciate fully the blasphemous nature of the work. It was Rushdie's interview with India Today (15th September 1988) that alerted and shocked the Muslim community in India. It was they who launched the first movement to have the book banned in their own country and it was their efforts which turned the book into an international issue. Soon the news had travelled to Britain, sending a shock-wave of revulsion and indignation among rank and file Muslims up and down the country. The Muslim community's first reaction was one of disbelief, seeing this as yet another literary attack on Islam in the tradition of the Orientalists and their medieval predecessors. But disbelief turned to dismay and outrage when it was seen through the excerpts circulated by Muslim organizations in Britain and India that The Satanic Verses was a deliberate attempt to malign and ridicule Islam and Muslim belief and practices in the most foul and vulgar manner. There is no precedent for this in modern literature no matter what the language of publication. Overwhelmed with pain, outrage and anger, the leaders of the Muslim community assembled at the Islamic Cultural Centre to discuss how they should react to this fitna (outrageous issue) and what action they could possibly take to redress their pain and grief occasioned by the book's publication. With one voice and with an extreme sense of urgency on 11th October 1988 the 'UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs' was formed to combat the

fitna and to guide the Muslim community in their efforts to express their anger and hurt, through democratic means, and to ensure that their protest stayed within the framework of the law.

An appeal was made to the Muslim community to vehemently protest against the publication of the book through letters, telephone calls and representations to the publishers, the author and the British government demanding that the book be withdrawn from circulation, that a public apology be made, that a pledge be given that the book would not be republished in any form or language and that compensation be made for injuring the feelings of Muslims the world over. A signature campaign outlining the four-point demand was launched and some 60,000 signatures were submitted to Viking/Penguin urging them to realize their 'mistake' and to take the necessary measures to redress the Muslims' grievances. For a few days, Viking/Penguin's telephone exchange was jammed by Muslim protesters and thousands of letters of protest were sent to their headquarters. An attempt was made to meet Peter Meyer, Penguin's Managing Director and the man behind the book's publication, but to no avail. The publisher's delayed response was arrogant in the extreme, with no appreciation of the extent of the injury to Muslims' feelings. To add insult to injury they also announced that they planned to translate and publish the book in at least nine other languages. Penguin continued to refuse to see any Muslim delegation on the issue and meanwhile the book had earned great acclaim from the literati in the West and was nominated for the prestigious Booker Prize. Naturally, Muslim frustration, bewilderment and anger intensified with the continuing insensibility of both the publishers and the British government. But the Muslim community resolved to steadfastly continue its campaign.

#### Islam and Freedom of Expression

Islam has neither advocated the suppression of freedom of expression nor encouraged censorship of healthy and useful material. Indeed, its historians and scholars have built up a unique tradition of recording knowledge, provided it came through a sound chain of authority. Had Islam wanted to censor materials or suppress information, malicious stories like the so-called 'Satanic Verses' would not have found a mention in the early

Muslim writings of Tabari or Ibn Sa'd. The stand which Muslims have taken over the publication of Rushdie's novel is not one which seeks to suppress freedom of expression but rather one which refuses to give licence for such abuse, ridicule and vulgar attack on Islam and on the values which Muslims hold sacred and regard dearer than their lives and properties.

Muslims are not angry because Rushdie has criticized Islam nor that he presented an academic refutation of some of its beliefs and practices which non-Muslim scholars, Orientalists, have been doing for centuries but because he has deliberately blasphemed against Islam and skilfully disguised this abuse in the form of a dream, a fictional dream, of a deranged mind. He not only abused the Our'an, the Prophet, his Companions, his wives, but also the Prophet Abraham, the Patriarch common to Islam, Christianity and Judaism, the Hindus, the Sikhs and in so doing did not spare the Oueen, the British Prime Minister and white women in general. The iniquitous four-letter word has been used so profusely that it occurs more than fifty times in the book, and other derisive and offensive remarks appear page after page. It is for this reason that Muslims consider Rushdie's book a piece of the most profane literature - a religious pornography. The list of offensive sentences and ideas recorded in the book is so long that to record and analyse them properly would amount to writing a book the size of Rushdie's own. It will be sufficient to discuss some of the most flagrant insinuations, innuendoes and abuses hurled against the Prophet, some of Islam's institutions and some of its personalities.

#### The Sacrilege of The Satanic Verses

Very few people realize that the name 'Satanic Verses' however innocent it may seem, is itself a great blasphemy, a sacrilege asserting that the Qur'ān is not immune from external manipulation and interpolation as God has proclaimed but that it was influenced and manipulated by Satan. The accusation cuts at the very root of Muslim belief that the Qur'ān is the unique revelation of God preserved in the same language and diction as was revealed to the Prophet through the agency of the Angel Gabriel 1400 years ago, unalloyed by any interpolation, change or editing.

The malicious story of the 'Satanic Verses' was initiated by

Orientalists on the basis of a misleading account of Gharaniq al-'Ulā (the high-soaring ones) which Satan is alleged to have inserted in Sura al-Najm, the 53rd chapter of the Our'an. According to this preposterous story, the Prophet was unable to detect the Satanic manipulation and so recited the 'Satanic Verses' in his prayers for days, if not months, without realizing their Satanic origin. This continued until the Angel Gabriel came one evening, rebuked the Prophet for his mistake, and changed the satanic verses for more appropriate ones.<sup>2</sup> As part of the story was mentioned in the earliest books of Muslim history such as those by Ibn Sa'd and Tabari, non-Muslim scholars such as Nöldeke, Muir and Watt have taken great relish in narrating the story with their usual embellishments, malice and innuendoes. However, most discerning scholars, both past and present, such as Ibn Ishaq, Ibn Hisham, Ibn Kathir, al-Razī, al-Qurtubī, Mawdudi, Sayyid Qutb and Haikal, have exposed the false nature of the story and regard it as a preposterous and malicious fabrication designed to cast serious doubt on the authenticity of the Qur'an and its message. Some Western scholars, such as the Italian Caetani and the Briton John Burton, have also regarded the story as pure fabrication and without foundation. Ordinary readers in the West who have no knowledge about the story do not realize that Rushdie by naming his novel The Satanic Verses has tried to kill, as it were, two birds with one stone - firstly, to discredit the Prophet and secondly, to make Muslims question their belief in the authenticity of the Qur'an, and so undermine the very basis of Islam. It needs an ingenious but malicious mind like that of Rushdie's to conjure up a plot like this!

#### Abuse against the Prophet's Companions (Ṣaḥāba)

Rushdie not only plants the outrageous story of the Satanic Verses in his novel but brands one of the greatest and most beloved Companions of the Prophet, Salman the Persian, as a cheat and a manipulator of the Qur'ānic revelations, despite the fact that Salman was neither an Arab nor a scribe as he embraced Islam not in Makka but in Madina. According to Rushdie, the Prophet not only failed to realize Salman's initial manipulation but also approved the interpolations in good faith. This disgusted Salman and made him forsake not only the Prophet but also Islam

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itself. This is how Rushdie builds up the scenario:

Little things at first. If Mahound recited a verse in which God was described as all-hearing, all-knowing, I would write, all-knowing, all-wise. Here's the point: Mahound did not notice the alterations. So there I was, actually writing the Book or re-writing, anyway, polluting the word of God with my own profane language...

So the next time I changed a bigger thing. He said *Christian*, I wrote down *Jew*. He'd notice that, surely; how could he not? But when I read him the chapter he nodded and thanked me politely, and I went out of his tent with tears in my eyes (pp. 367-8).

Disillusioned with the Prophet and Islamic Sharī'a, so asserts Rushdie, Salman the Persian became an apostate, went back to the hedonistic metropolis of Jāhiliyya and launched a bitter ideological assault on Islam. For example, Rushdie asserts that Salman narrated his experience with the Prophet to the anti-Islamic poet Baal, saying: 'Mahound had no time for scruples . . . no qualms about ends and means' that 'the closer you are to a conjurer, the easier to spot the trick' (p. 363) and again Mahound 'laid down the law and the angel would confirm it afterwards' (p. 365). Rushdie regards the rules of Islamic law as 'revelations of convenience' (p 365) with bizarre and obnoxious statements like 'sodomy and the missionary position were approved of by the archangel, whereas the forbidden postures included all those in which the female was on top' (p. 364). What further proof do we need of a deranged and perverted mind!

Another leading Companion and the first Muezzin of Islam, Bilal the Abyssinian, has been abused as 'scum', 'an enormous black monster, this one, with a voice to match his size' (p. 101) - an abuse of monstrous proportions indeed! Rushdie abuses other Companions of the Prophet, Khalid, Bilal and Salman, as 'this trinity of scum', 'that bunch of riff-raff' (p. 101), 'stupid drunk' (p. 117), 'those goons and - those f... clowns' (p. 101).

#### Abuse against the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)

The worst target of Rushdie's invective and gratuitous attack is the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) himself. Not only

is the Prophet depicted as incapable of distinguishing between revelation from an Angel and inspiration from the Devil, he has also been presented as a devil incarnate, the Mahound. 'Our mountain-climbing, prophet-motivated solitary', derides Rushdie, 'is to be the medieval baby-frightener, the Devil's synonym: Mahound' (p. 93). The deliberate use of the medieval stereotype for the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) whom Muslims love and revere more than their parents and their own selves is not only highly provocative, but derogatory in the extreme and without justification. The epithet 'Mahound' and its different variants in medieval times were used by Christian clerics to deride the Prophet who was accused of being an impostor, an anti-Christ, a devil and a licentious person who used the wives of other men to satisfy his lust and who brought revelations to justify his promiscuous conduct.

Rushdie further ridicules the Prophet, deriding him as 'the businessman-turned-prophet, Mahound, is founding one of the world's great religions; and . . . There is a voice whispering in his ear: 'what kind of idea are you? Man-or-mouse?' (p. 95). He is also alleged to have said: 'writers and whores, I see no difference here' (p. 392). At another place the Prophet is accused of lying naked and unconscious in the tent of Hind with a 'bursting headache'. Hind 'sits close to him on the bed . . . and strokes his chest' (pp. 119-21). When he asked Hind how he happened to be there, Hind answered: 'I was walking the city streets last night, masked, to see the festivities, and what should I stumble over but your unconscious body? Like a drunk in the gutter, Mahound. I sent my servants for a litter and brought you home' (p. 120).

In another sensuous scene, Hind is shown licking the Prophet's feet 'in excessive, sensual adoration' (p. 374). The Prophet is also described as wrestling with Gibreel in the cave stark naked, with a vivid and intimate description (p. 122). The Prophet has not only been called 'a small bastard' but a debauchee, who, after the death of his wife, slept with so many women that 'they turned his beard half-white in a year' (p. 366). Rushdie further derides the Prophet, saying: 'He went for mothers and daughters, think of his first wife and then Ayesha: too old and too young, his two loves. He didn't like to pick on someone his own size' (p. 366). There are several other offensive and obscene remarks about the Prophet, not even sparing the four-letter word (pp. 366; 367; 381; 386).

It is true that the Prophet's contemporary arch-enemies, the polytheists of Makka, called him a liar, said he was possessed of Jinn and insane and that the medieval Christian detractors applied all sorts of abusive epithets to him, but Rushdie with his obscenity, vulgarity and the intensity of his hatred has surpassed them all. One wonders whether these vulgar attacks on the life of the Beloved Prophet are an attempt to rewrite history, albeit from a secular perspective, as he has claimed in one of his earlier interviews, or whether it is a deliberate effort to injure Muslims' feelings and incite them to violence and desperate reactions. Rushdie must have known that a malicious story published in a Bangalore newspaper, The Deccan Herald, in December 1986. entitled 'Muhammad the Idiot' with no direct reference to the Prophet caused widespread violence and riots resulting in the death of some 50 people in India. The mere fact that the name Muhammad was used in the fiction for the deaf mute boy and he was further called an idiot was enough to rouse the feelings of ordinary Muslims who overwhelmed with anger and outrage did not hesitate to sacrifice their lives in order to protect the dignity and honour of the Prophet. Rushdie should also know that in India again, as early as 1924, the person responsible for publishing a blasphemous and provocative book in Urdu entitled Rangila Rasul (The Licentious Prophet) was murdered in the courtroom by an illiterate Muslim, Ghazi Ilmuddin, who sacrificed his life to save the honour of the Prophet and who proudly embraced a death sentence issued by the then British administration.3

Rushdie should also have known that some 50 years ago, when the British historian, H.G. Wells, depicted an unflattering portrait of the Prophet in his Short History of the World (originally published in 1922 and reprinted by Penguin in 1946) not in any way comparable to Rushdie's blasphemy, it occasioned great fury and resentment in the Muslim world. Protest rallies were held not only in London but in Kenya (Mombasa, Nairobi) and Uganda (Kampala) and demands were made to ban it throughout the British Empire. Muslims, as James Piscatori<sup>4</sup> informs us, 'demanded the severe punishment of the author for offending the religious sensibilities of millions of British subjects, and otherwise peaceful people'. The Muslims' anger did not subside until Lord Zelland, the then Secretary of State for India, expressed regrets at the injury caused to Muslims by the publication of the book.

It is no wonder that with the publication of Rushdie's offensive and outrageous book, Muslims all over the world became outraged and showed their anger through protest marches and demonstrations. The governments of Pakistan and India unfortunately panicked and handled the situation with the utmost inefficiency and brutality. The police opened fire on unarmed demonstrators, and caused the unnecessary and unfortunate deaths of over 20 people (at least 7 in Islamabad, 2 in Srinagar, and 13 in Rushdie's own birthplace, Bombay) and injury to hundreds more. Despite this, Muslims still regard this as a small price if their martyrdom can bring the fitna to an end. But it has been proved beyond any doubt that to the British government and the publishers of Rushdie's work the life of the blasphemer is more important and sacred than the lives of these people.

#### Abuse against the Prophet's Family

Rushdie not only reviles the Prophet in the most vulgar ways, but also portrays the Prophet's wives in the most shameful and indecent manner. The Prophet's wives, according to Qur'ānic parlance, are the 'Mothers of the Faithful' and are respected by Muslims in the same way that the Prophet is revered. By calling the brothel a 'curtain' and locating it in the Ka'ba, Rushdie on the one hand, ridicules the Islamic tradition of *Ḥijāb* (Muslim women's dress) and on the other, defiles the sanctity of the Ka'ba, the House of God, the symbol of Muslim unity, towards which Muslims the world over face in their five daily prayers. Rushdie compounds the blasphemy by giving the prostitutes the names of the Prophet's wives. This is how Rushdie pours out his venom against the Prophet's family and how, one by one, he abuses the Mothers of the Faithful:

When the news got around Jahilia that the whores of The Curtain had each assumed the identity of one of Mahound's wives, the clandestine excitement of the city's males was intense... The fifteen-year-old whore 'Ayesha' was the most popular with the paying public, just as her namesake was with Mahound... The oldest, fattest whore, who had taken the name of 'Sawdah', would tell her visitors – and she had plenty, many of the men of Jahilia seeking her out for her maternal and also grateful charms – the story of how

Mahound had married her and Ayesha, on the same day, when Avesha was just a child .... The whore 'Hafsah' grew as hot-tempered as her namesake, and as the twelve entered into the spirit of their roles the alliances in the brothel came to mirror the political cliques at the Yathrib mosque; 'Ayesha' and 'Hafsah', for example, engaged in constant, petty rivalries against the two haughtiest whores, who had always been thought a bit stuck-up by the others and who had chosen for themselves the most aristocratic identities, becoming 'Umm Salamah the Makhzumite', and the snootiest of them all. Ramlah, whose namesake, the eleventh wife of Mahound. was the daughter of Abu Simbel and Hind. And there was a 'Zainab bint Jahsh', and a 'Juwairiyah', named after the bride captured on a military expedition, and a 'Rehana the Jew', a 'Safia' and a 'Maimunah' and, most erotic of all the whores, who knew tricks she refused to teach to competitive 'Avesha': the glamorous Egyptian, 'Mary the Copt'. Strangest of all was the whore who had taken the name of 'Zainab bint Khuzaimah', knowing that this wife of Mahound had recently died (pp. 381-2).

Rushdie also ridicules the sacred act of tawāf in the Hajj and 'Umra by saying the clients' curled around the innermost courtyard of the brothel rotating about its centrally positioned fountain of love much as pilgrims rotated for other reasons around the ancient pillar of stone' (p. 381). Can one think of anything more outrageous in its profanity than the book Rushdie has produced, considered by some as a specimen of fine literature worthy of receiving the highest literary award, the Booker Prize? When Muslims protest at such profanity and abuse they become reactionary, fundamentalist and uncivilized, yet if Rushdie vomits such profligacy he becomes a champion of freedom of expression. What a unique pronouncement of Western secular liberalism!

#### Abuse against Islamic Institutions

Islamic law or Shari'a to Rushdie is a jumbled up set of rules which relates to 'every damn thing', 'if a man farts, let him turn his face to the wind, a rule about which hand to use for the purpose of cleaning one's behind . . . The revelation — the

recitation told the faithful how much to eat, how deeply they should sleep, and which sexual positions had received divine sanction' (pp. 363-4). Even the institution of Wuḍū' (ablution) and prayer has not escaped Rushdie's ridicule and derision. Note how he makes fun of these: 'Ablutions, always ablutions, the legs up to the knees, the arms down to the elbows, the head down to the neck. Dry torsoed, wet-limbed and damp-headed, what eccentrics they look! Splish, splosh, washing and praying. On their knees, pushing arms, legs, heads back into the ubiquitous sand, and then beginning again the cycle of water and prayer' (p. 104). The Muslim ritual of slaughtering the animal to obtain halāl meat also receives derisive comment, saying: 'animals to be killed slowly, by bleeding, so that by experiencing their deaths to the full they might arrive at an understanding of the meaning of their lives' (p. 364).

Muslims could have forgiven him for giving the two main characters in the novel the names of the Angel Gabriel (as Gibreel Farishta) and the Muslim hero Ṣalāḥuddīn Ayyūbī (as Saladin Chamcha) albeit in a derogatory form meaning a sycophant, a spoony. (It is to be noted that the Angel Jibrīl is one of the leading-most angels responsible for bringing down the revelation to all the Prophets, and Ṣalāḥuddīn Ayyūbī is the great champion of Islamic Jihād who defeated the Crusaders and liberated the Masjid Al-Aqṣā from the Christians.) However, they cannot forgive the gratuitous and obscene attack on the life of the

Prophet, his family and Companions.

In condemnation of such profanity, Muslims of all shades, with the exception of a few of Rushdie's friends like Tariq Ali and Hanif Qureshi, have come forward with one voice, with great solidarity and unison. It is not surprising that an open-minded Muslim like Dr. Zaki Badawi – who evoked the scathing criticism and even wrath of the Muslim community for his offer of asylum to Rushdie and who on Christmas Eve 1990 took part in the drama whereby Rushdie embraced Islam at the hands of the Egyptian Minister of Endowment – regards Rushdie's book 'like a knife being dug into you – or being raped yourself'. He further holds that what Rushdie has written is 'far worse to Muslims than if he's raped one's own daughter'. Similarly, the Tanzanian scholar, Professor Ali Mazrui, during his visit to Pakistan in November 1988, was particularly struck by the analogy given by some

Pakistanis to the blasphemy contained in Rushdie's book: 'It's as if Rushdie had composed a brilliant poem about the private parts of his parents, and then gone to the market place to recite that poem to the applause of strangers, who invariably laughed at the jokes he cracks about his parents' genitalia — and he's taking money for doing it.' It is also in this spirit that Shabbir Akhtar wrote: 'Any Muslim who fails to be offended by Rushdie's book ceases on account of the fact to be a Muslim.'8

In a similar tone, Ziauddin Sardar and Merryl Wyn Davies were obliged to write: 'By reducing the Prophet to a caricature, embedied in the persona of an object of fear and loathing, by abusing him and his Sunnah in the most vicious and violent manner, he has tried to destroy the sanctity of the Prophet as a paradigm of behaviour; it is as though he has personally assaulted and raped every single believing Muslim man and woman! (italics ours).

It is clear from the above that it is not freedom of expression or freedom to question or even freedom to criticize or offend that Muslims are objecting to. It is rather the sheer slander, the abuse, the use of obscene and foul language, and the outrageous liberties which Rushdie has taken with Islam and its Prophet that has distressed and outraged Muslims. This is what has compelled them to take their own desperate steps of protest. It is in the nature of their faith that Muslims must not abuse or injure the feelings of others, nor should they tolerate any provocative and obnoxious attack on the person of the Prophet, his family members and his Companions. The love of the Prophet is not only the main criteria of \$\ilde{l} \text{Imin} (\text{faith})\$, it is the raison d'être for the existence of every Muslim. The Prophet is not loved superficially by paying lip service; his \$\ilde{Sunna}\$ (the way of life) is internalized in every Muslim's behaviour.

The question is if Rushdie wanted to write on the theme of 'migration, metamorphosis, divided selves, love, death, London and Bombay', why did he provocatively name the book 'The Satunic Verses'? Why did he, as Faruqi says, devote six out of nine chapters to an Islamic theme, Islamic symbolism and with real Islamic characters only thinly disguised by a mix of fantasy and the absurd? Why did he compound the blasphemy by using the derogatory synonym, coined in the European Middle Ages, of Mahound for the Prophet Muḥammad which by his own

admission meant medieval baby-frightener and devil? 10 Could he not have spared his readers all this rubbish and filth? What else apart from a deliberate attempt to ridicule Islam and abuse the Prophet and everything sacrosanct to Muslims can explain the purpose of Rushdie's book? Not only Muslims but several non-Muslim scholars and critics also regarded Rushdie's book as filthy and non-readable. The Washington Times reviewer (13 February 1989) for example wrote: 'But having discovered no literary reason why Mr. Rushdie chose to portray Muhammad's wives as prostitutes, the Koran as the work of Satan and the founders of the faith as roughnecks and cheats, I had to admit to a certain sympathy with the Islamic leaders' complaints. True or not, slander hurts the slandered, which makes 'The Satanic Verses' not simply a rambling and trivial book, but a nasty one as well.'

Exposing Rushdie's blasphemy and calculated insult with malicious intent, Sardar and Davies rightly inform us that: 'Dreams are Rushdie's stratagem for presenting his own ideas about religion, monotheism, prophethood and, specifically, about Islam and its Prophet, without having to acknowledge the limits of propriety, respect for the sensitivity of others or the complexity of the historical record. Most of all, the dream stratagem enables him to play a game with historical fact, spicing the novel with a grand sufficiency of historical detail to establish his credentials without having to be responsible to accuracy, or honesty, in handling these facts.'11

It is claimed that the sequences Muslims found so objectionable in the novel happened in dreams to a character suffering a psychotic breakdown. But one wonders if the same things had happened to Christian and Jewish believers and their faiths, how such insults would be stomached? Would they let them go unchallenged in the name of freedom of expression? For example, if the Virgin Mary (God forbid) was portrayed as a prostitute and Jesus as an illegitimate child of one of her sexual clients and the Disciples of Jesus as a gang of homosexuals (given to gay orgies in the Garden of Gethsemane) or if Hitler was depicted as the Saviour of the Jews, would the Christian and Jewish communities tolerate, let alone passionately patronize such publications? Similarly, if the Queen was projected as a prostitute, and members of the Royal Family as debauchees with no morals, how would

the British public react? As Professor Mazzui puts it admirably: 'It would be interesting to speculate which ones of the leading Western writers would march in a procession in defence of the rights of such a novelist.' 12

Are we prepared to give such authors the right to blaspheme under the right to freedom of expression? Why then, one may ask, is Islam judged by a different vardstick? When a fictional film under the title 'International Guerilla' is released in Pakistan and is requested to be shown on British television, why is there such a hue and cry against it? Why did the distributor have to take recourse to the courts and why did it take several months for him to win his right to distribute the video in the UK? Is it not true that not long ago, in 1987, the management of London's Royal Court Theatre faced with the protests of some members of the Jewish community, abandoned its plan to stage Jim Allen's play Perdition which questioned the account of the Holocaust and injured the feelings of the Jewish community? 13 Have the present directors and administrators of Penguin publishing house forgotten that a whole Penguin edition of the French cartoonist Sines' book Massacre was literally burned by Allen Lane, one of Penguin's former chiefs, and declared out of print, as soon as he was told the book was regarded as blasphemous and offensive?14 Why is it then, one may ask, when Penguin's Indian literary referee, Mr. Khushwant Singh, who is not a Muslim, let alone a fundamentalist, advised Penguin about the lethal nature of The Satanic Verses and recommended that it not be published, and if The Independent's report is to be believed some British referees also endorsed this view, Viking/Penguin published this book? Is it that there is one rule for Islam and another for the non-Islamic world? Echoing a similar concern and supporting the voices of civility, Prof. John Vincent of Bristol University, as early as 2nd March, 1989 when the Muslim campaign was in its early stages, in The Times made the following incisive comments: 'In the case of blasphemy, that [the equality of law] is strictly untrue. We deny Islamic fellow subjects a remedy at law; we then chide them for contemplating remedies outside it. For Christians, the courts are open; to Muslims, suffering identical grievances, they are shut. It is a strange way to show the British sense of fair play.'

The Muslims' demand to withdraw the filthy book is not something unreasonable or unprecedented in civilized history.

Despite the sacred right to freedom of expression and freedom to publish, every civilized society enacts laws that restrict their freedom and keep it within the bounds of decency and fair play. Unbridled use or abuse of freedom has never been accepted as a norm by any civilized government or society. Among the many letters published in British newspapers during the controversy on The Satanic Verses Affair, one may quote a few lines from the perceptive remarks of Dr. Edward de Bono, which appeared in The Times, on 12th February, 1990: 'Civilisation is not solely defined by freedom, but by the way freedom is limited by responsibility, duties, compassion, and, when these prove inadequate, the law. The jungle is free – civilisation is not. Those who want the freedom of the jungle must also accept the retribution of the jungle without yelping.

The freedom to insult is matched by the freedom to feel insulted. Those who exercise power without restraint are bullies. Unlimited freedom to insult is not the mark of civilisation that is so strenuously claimed under the misleading banner of "freedom".

It is no wonder that the final sentence of the concluding paragraph in the international PEN Charter of the World Association of Writers clearly holds: 'And since freedom implies voluntary restraint, members pledge themselves to oppose such evils of a free press as mendacious publication, deliberate falsehood and distortion of facts for political and personal ends.' Perhaps keeping this principle in view, Michael Ignatieff once commented that 'Freedom is not a holy belief, nor even a supreme value'. 15 It is in this vein that Shabbir Akhtar asked the question: 'Does the secular clergy have the right to canonise freedom of speech as an absolute value overriding all other relevant considerations?'16 The answer cannot be but in the negative. Otherwise the whole range of restrictions on free speech in the UK such as 'the law on patents, copyright, contracts in restraint of trade, protection of trade secrets, intellectual property, misleading or dangerous advertisements and consumer protection, libel, slander, treason, conspiracy to commit crimes, incitement to commit crimes, official secrets, breach of confidence, obscenity, blasphemy, and incitement to racial hatred'17 will be preposterous. Restrictions on publications such as Spycatcher in England, cancellation of plays like Perdition, suppression of Sinn Fein's

some over British radio and television, burning of loads of hard-core pornographic materials by customs officials and similar arts in the interest of public order, civility and government requirements are not unknown in the West. In fact such restricnow are regarded as necessary not only to maintain law and order, but deceney, and peace in society. One of the recent cumples set by the publishing magnate, Robert Maxwell, in New opies of an offensive and blasphemous book, is highly instructive. The book was supposed to be a movel by Garth Ennis that offensively described God as a brockage in the world's toilet'. This was not only offensive and sacriegious to Christians but also to Muslims and any believer who retained a belief in God. However, in this case, a letter of groses from the Evangelical Alliance was sufficient for Robert Maxwell to order Fleetway, one of his publishing companies, to the entire stock and redress the grievance of the Christian The recent controversy over American Psycho, the latest named by B. E. Ellis, offending feminists in the United States, is also a case in point. One of the great champions of free speech and supporters of Salman Rushdie, astonishingly, Fay Weldon rould not help voicing her protest against this offensive book. The recentive comments of James Tweed on Robert Maxwell's willingness to withdraw the offensive book by G. Ennis without less or comment and the intransigent attitude of Viking/Penguin about withdrawing Rushdie's most outrageous book is worth mentioning.

The Evangelical Alliance's letter could just as easily have been written by Muslim leaders about *The Satanic Verses*. What would have happened, one wonders, if Robert Maxwell had been Salman Rushdie's publisher?' 19

#### The British Media and the Muslims

The Western media in general and the British media in particular, with rare exceptions, played a very negative game against Muslims and took the Rushdie saga as a golden opportunity to settle some old scores. In criticizing Islam they exceeded all norms of decency and vied with each other in painting an obnoulous picture conjuring up all the much-maligned images reminiscent of the Crusades. Its rage against Islam, as Bhikhu

Parekh puts it, 'escalated step by even sillier step to a wholly mindless anger first against *Bradford* Muslims, then against all *British* Muslims, then against all *Muslims*, and ultimately against *Islam* itself. <sup>20</sup> Or as John Michell suggests, 'first the Muslims were inflamed against the West; hate-filled Western propaganda was then propelled against Islam'. <sup>21</sup>

Although the Muslims' campaign against the sacrilegious book from October 1988 onward evoked criticism and sometimes scathing remarks from the media, it was the book-burning incident on 14th January, 1989 in Bradford that ignited the hate campaign against British Muslims and Islam which was further accentuated by the late Avatollah Khomeini's fatwā or death sentence on the author on 14th February, 1989. It is to be noted that Rushdie's book was also burned in Bolton on 2nd December (before the Bradford incident) but the media did not care to report it. Bradford turned out to be a special case. It is now amply documented that the Bradford incident was staged by certain sections of the media and a London solicitor was behind the 'arrangement'.22 (However, the Bradford Council for Mosques has rejected this version of events.<sup>22A</sup>) Naturally the 'ceremony' was properly filmed and broadcast the world over with vicious comments comparing Muslims with Nazis and labelling them as 'barbarians', 'uncivilized', 'fanatics', 'ignorant', 'bloodthirsty bigots' and 'medieval fundamentalists'. The people in the media knew very well that the Muslims' act of burning a copy of The Satanic Verses bore no resemblance to the Nazi burning of libraries and harassment of intellectuals and it was more in the nature of a desperate attempt to draw the attention of the media than an act of intolerance, they did not show any let-up in their campaign of vilification and denunciation of Islam and Muslims. It was painfully one-way traffic and all attempts by Muslim spokesmen to clarify the situation and present the Muslim viewpoint in the print and electronic media were frustrated. Both the tabloid and quality papers joined hands in mocking the Muslims, accusing them of intolerance and, as Bhikhu Parekh puts it, 'wondered if a tolerant society should tolerate the intolerant'. 23 The London literati, in the words of Malise Ruthven, 'shared a crusading outrage at Muslim desecration of the temple of free speech',24 and consequently planned to hurl all sorts of calumnies against Islam and disparage the British Muslims. In an article entitled 'The New Appeasers Who Bow to Mecca', Stephen

Vitinczey (The Sunday Telegraph, 19th March, 1989), for example, accuses: 'booksellers all over Europe and North America are being terrorsed into hiding the novel', and further asserted, 'what is at issue is the militant Islamic right to dictate to us what we can read, write, print, distribute and display.'

Clifford Longley, the respected religious correspondent of *The Times* (29th December, 1990) asserted that the paradox of Islam is that it 'knows how to treat minorities – but it does not know how to be a minority'. He did not hesitate to give a *fatwa* on British Muslims, saying: They need to be able to incorporate into the Islamic tradition of religious tolerance the Western (and by no means un-Islamic) principle that to compel a man against his conscience, or to punish him for his religious thought, is one of the most abhorrent of crimes. Once past that watershed, Islam has a healthy future as a Western religion. *If not, it has no future here at all'* (italics ours).

An appalling example of the madness shown by the self-appointed standard-bearers of 'reason', 'tolerance', and 'objectivity' is typified in *The Times* editorial 'A Greater Evil' (6th February, 1990). Apart from accusing in a hysterical tone the Muslim campaign leaders of acting on behalf of 'foreign (read Iran) paymasters' it goads the British government with all the urgency at its command to stiffen immediately laws for punishing the Muslim campaigners. Since even this would not placate the hurt ego and the suggested legislation might take some time, here is the interim solution offered without any qualms of conscience: 'Meanwhile any Muslim troublemaker without full British citizenship should be expelled from the country.'

Not surprisingly, the editorial contains not a single reference to the outraged Muslim sensitivities.

In an earlier editorial, 'Race, Religion and Rushdie', *The Times* (25th July, 1989) emphasizing learning of English for British Muslims, pronounced the following edict: 'British Muslim children should know their Koran: of course, but *they should also know their Shakespeare*' (italics ours). As if Muslim children were not going to the same school, following the same syllabus with English as one of the core subjects.

About the Muslim demand for abandoning the paperback edition of *The Satanic Verses*, the loaded imagery employed in *The Independent* (6th February, 1990) is worth noting: 'Without

doubt it would be an intolerable victory for the book-burners if Mr. Rushdie or his publishers were to be bullied or morally blackmailed into abandoning publication against their will.'

Robert Kilroy-Silk, a regular columnist in *The Times*, holds the unenviable distinction of consistently provoking both the British public and government for a tougher, harsher stand against British Muslims whom he brands as 'resident Ayatollahs'. For him there is nothing racist in his belief that 'if Muslim immigrants cannot and will not accept British values and laws then there is no reason at all why the British should feel any need, still less compulsion, to accommodate theirs' ('Defending Ethnic Majorities', *The Times*, 17th February, 1989). Needless to say, the tenor of such utterances smacks not only of racism but of fascism too.

Anthony Burgess in *The Independent* (16th February, 1989) did not hesitate in comparing Muslims to Nazis who, according to him, shame Britain 'through the vindictive agency of bonfires'. In a patronizing tone he advised them to 'fly to the arms of the Ayatollah or some self-righteous guardian of strict morality',

rather than staying in secular Britain.

In line with the media assault on the British Muslims was its hounding of Dr. Runcie, the then Archbishop of Canterbury, for his appeal to the BBC to not show Harrison's offensive 'The Blasphemous Banquet'. The Daily Telegraph (11th August, 1989) was quick to exhort Dr. Runcie that the Church 'cannot in any circumstances counsel accommodation with evil' (read the British Muslims' protest against The Satanic Verses).

Against this backdrop how ironic looks this patently self-deceptive statement: 'tolerance is now the prevailing code of West European society' (*The Independent*, 20th July, 1989). For who on earth can reconcile this flaunted spirit of tolerance with Norman Stone's impassioned war cry: 'The Mahdi is the enemy of mankind, and particularly of womankind, and we need all the allies we can get. The world as a whole must unite to make sure that fundamentalist Islam does not get away with it' ('We Need Russian Help Against Islam', *The Sunday Telegraph*, 19th February, 1989).

Even all these hysterical pieces pale into insignificance as one reads the delirious writings of Fay Weldon, a British novelist of a sort, now better known as a notorious activist on Rushdie's behalf. Her venomous raving about Islam, the Qur'ān and

Muslims falls nothing short of sheer abuse uttered with mindless crudity. Take these excerpts from Weldon as instances in point: The Keran is food for no-thought. It is not a poem on which society can be safely or sensibly based. It forbids change, interpretation, self-knowledge or even art, for fear of treading on Allah's creative toes... (The Our'an) gives weapons and strength to the thought police ... My great complaint [is] against the God oilslam, this God of vengeance, wrath and occasional forgiveness, who rules by terror and threat . . . The Koran, the extraordinary piece of verse gives the believer permission to hate the unbeliever. The Satanic Verses, the other extraordinary piece of poetry, does not, oddly enough, give permission to hate' (Fay Weldon, Sacred Cons. London, Chatto & Windus, 1989).

In a similar crusading tone but full of venom and rancour one can see the Daily Star (21st February, 1989) screaming about the Avatollah in foul language: 'Isn't the world getting sick of the ranting that pours non-stop from the disgusting foam-flecked lips of the Avatollah Khomeini? Clearly this Muslim cleric is stark raving mad. And more dangerous than a rabid dog. Surely the tragedy is that millions of his misguided and equally potty followers believe every word of hatred he hisses through those vellow-stained teeth. The terrifying thing is not that a lot of these crackpots actually live here among us in Britain, but that we are actually becoming frightened of them. The whole thing is crazy. And it has to stop.'

To conclude this discussion it will not be inappropriate to quote a paragraph from Prof. Bhikhu Parekh's insightful and perceptive evaluation of 'The Rushdie Affair and the British Press': 'As happens so often in "tribal" England', he commented, 'it [the national press] instinctively ganged up against the Muslims, mocking, abusing, ridiculing and morally bludgeoning them into silence. With several honourable exceptions, the racism of many a journalist was just below the surface. They attacked not just the protest, which they were entitled to do, but the entire Muslim community as barbarians unfit to be citizens of a civilized society. The widely used and never clearly defined term "fundamentalism" became a popularly accepted disguise under which racism masgueraded itself. Catholic, Jewish and Anglican fundamentalism were acceptable, but not Muslim. Every Muslim parent who disapproved of sexual permissiveness, mixed sports or girls

wearing shorts was dismissed as a fundamentalist. The term became a devious device for blackmailing Muslims into rejecting their values. Hardly any liberal realized that in countering Muslim "fundamentalism", they were setting up a rival fundamentalism of their own and corrupting the great liberal tradition. Historically speaking, whenever liberalism has felt frightened and nervous, it has tended to become aggressive and intolerant. The Rushdie affair was no exception. '25

#### The Story of Rushdie's 'Conversion' to Islam

On Christmas Eve, 24th December 1990, Rushdie dramatically declared his acceptance of Islam at the hands of six Egyptian Muslim scholars led by the Egyptian Minister of Awqaf Dr. Muhammad Ali Mahgoub. For several weeks prior to this news had filtered through of Rushdie's discussions with some unnamed Muslim leaders, who had apparently assured him that the Iranian fatwa could be lifted and that the matter would be resolved to Rushdie's satisfaction. Muslim leaders up and down the country denounced this report as 'malicious propaganda' and as an attempt to dent Muslim unity.

However, following the Muslim community's demand, a Harley Street dentist, Dr. Hesham el-Essawy, emerged from 'hiding' and claimed in the newspapers that he had had a very interesting and frank discussion with Mr. Rushdie over the telephone and that Mr. Rushdie's views about Islam had undergone considerable change. It was Dr. el-Essawy who prompted Rushdie to embrace Islam and set up the 'stage' in which two Egyptian Imams, of London's Regents Park Central Mosque, were also involved. The other Muslim 'scholars' involved were Dr. Zaki Badawi, the first secretary of the Egyptian Embassy in London and el-Essawy himself. Hesham el-Essawy also asked Dr. A.A. Mughram Al-Ghamdi, the Director General of the Central Mosque and the Islamic Cultural Centre, to allow him to stage the 'ceremony' in the Central Mosque. Dr. Ghamdi, being the Chairman of the UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs and the Central Mosque being the headquarters of the Action Committee, could not but give a scornful refusal. The ceremony, however, is reported to have taken place in a hotel and the following statement purporting to affirm Islam was released by Rushdie and countersigned by the six witnesses present:

In the presence of His Excellency the Egyptian Secretary of State for Endowment and the Head of the Supreme Council of Scholars of Islamic Affairs, Dr. Muhammad Ali Mahgoub, and a group of Islamic scholars:

 To witness that there is no God but Allah and that Muhammad is His last Prophet.

2. To declare that I do not agree with any statement in my novel *The Satanic Verses* uttered by any of the characters who insult the Prophet Muhammad or who cast aspersions upon Islam or who question the authenticity of the Holy Quran, or who reject the divinity of Allah.

 I undertake not to publish the paperback edition of The Satanic Verses or to permit any further agreements for translation into other languages, while any risk of further offence exists.

4. I will continue to work for a better understanding of Islam in the world, as I have always attempted to do in the past.'

Under normal circumstances, Muslims would have rejoiced at Rushdie's return to Islam and at seeing a conclusion to this painful episode. Indeed, the Muslim community initially welcomed the news, regarding it as a step in the right direction, but soon their joy turned into dismay when they discovered that there was no mention of the hardback edition of the offensive book and that the statement regarding the non-publication of the paperback edition was hedged round an ingenious ploy – 'while any risk of further offence exists'. Their dismay was further heightened when they saw Rushdie not only defending the hardback edition of *The Satanic Verses* but also giving a completely false statement on BBC1 Television (News at Nine, 24th December, 1990) to the effect that the Egyptian Muslim scholars did not regard his book as offensive, and implying that had they done so, he would have considered withdrawing it from circulation.

It is on record, however, that not only did those same Muslim 'scholars' regard Rushdie's book as highly offensive, but that they also asked him during the course of their meeting to withdraw the hardback edition as well. He lied to them, saying he could not withdraw the book as it rests within the domain of the publisher and he had no control over its sale and distribution. Shaikh Jamal Manna Ali Solaiman, the Chief Imam of the Central

Mosque, London, who was one of the witnesses to Rushdie's conversion, was obliged, the following day, to issue a 'statement of clarification' declaring categorically that 'at no time in the meeting was it accepted that the novel was inoffensive to Islam' and that 'he strongly urged the publishers and all concerned to withdraw that offensive novel from circulation'.26

Rushdie, on the other hand, was not only apologetic but evasive in his reply in the same News programme. John Humphries asked him about his conversion to Islam. Rather than simply saying 'Yes', he replied in a long-winded answer that he had 'moved closer and closer to an engagement with religious faith' and that he had 'no quarrel with the central tenets of Islam'. Perhaps this prompted Frances de Souza, the Chairwoman of the Rushdie Defence Committee, to state (*The Times*, 27th December, 1990) that 'Salman Rushdie feels very strongly that he has not necessarily changed his position' and that is why 'he has talked about embracing the religion. Conversion is not the word he has used.'

Faced by criticism from friend and foe alike, Rushdie published an 'apology' the following day (i.e. Friday, 28th December) in the form of a clarification in The Times with the title 'Why I have embraced Islam'. Once again he played with words, showed his mastery of jugglery, and repeated the same lies he had expressed on television. In short, he showed no remorse at the offence caused by the publication of his sacrilegious book. He tried to dupe the readers once again by saying that 'The Satanic Verses was never intended as an insult; that the story of Gibreel is a parable of how a man can be destroyed by the loss of faith'. And again, 'the six scholars and I agreed that the controversy of The Satanic Verses was based on a tragic misunderstanding, and we must all now work to explain to Muslims everywhere that neither I nor my work have ever been inimical to Islam. As to the question of total withdrawal of the book, I would say this. In spite of everything, The Satanic Verses is a novel that many of its readers have found to be of value. I cannot betray them. Even more important is the recognition of Muslim scholars that the book is not a deliberate insult. Had they felt otherwise, I might well have thought again. As it is, I believe the book must continue to be available, so that it can gradually be seen for what it is.'

Seven days after Rushdie's embracing of Islam, his friend Hesham el-Essawy arranged an interview in London with Yasir Farhan, an Egyptian correspondent of al-Muslimūn, the weekly maganne published from Saudi Arabia (18th January, 1991, issue Na. 311). Instead of giving clear-cut and straightforward answers to the questions about whether or not he had embraced Islam, Rushdie once again gave long-winded and apologetic answers and refused to acknowledge that the book was in any way offensive. He not only refused to withdraw the book from circulation but denied having committed any offence through writing the sacrilegious book. The journalist who, with great hope, came to meet a repentant Rushdie, was naturally shocked and disappointed to see a defiant and apostate Rushdie.

To those Muslims who gave him the benefit of the doubt in his reported affirmation of Islam, it has now become crystal clear that Rushdie intended to play a dual game. On the one hand, seeking to please his supporters, an assorted group of secular intellectuals, by not withdrawing the hardback edition, and on the other the Muslims, by promising not to publish the paperback edition and further translations of his offensive book. His friends, Hesham el-Essawy and Zaki Badawi, have both told Muslims that since the act of one's 'embracing Islam' nullifies his past sins, Rushdie has now become 'pure' and that moreover he has made a great monetary sacrifice, £4-5 million, by undertaking not to publish the paperback edition. However, every Muslim knows, as we made clear in the letters column of The Independent (Friday, 4th January, 1991)] that the author cannot be automatically absolved of the offence following his 'conversion' to Islam if the book remains in circulation and the author does not repent of having written it. Indeed, his affirmation of Islam becomes meaningless and the offence he has committed by writing and publishing The Satanic Verses continues if the book stays in circulation in the form of hardback and translations.

This is why the UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs and other organizations regarded Rushdie's conversion and statements as 'a disingenious ploy to bail out the unrepentant author . . . without meeting any of the concerns of the Muslim community and indeed dismissing it and mocking it as causing a "furore" over nothing'. As the Muslim community rightly explained, whereas Rushdie previously sought to achieve his means through the pen of an 'unbeliever', he now seeks the same ends as a self-appointed member of the Muslim community.

Faced with such a clear response from the Muslim community which, unequivocally, dismissed his conversion to Islam and rejected also by some of his erstwhile literati supporters, who not only regarded his Islam as a betrayal under compulsion but also as a reconciliation with that 'bigoted' creed which sentenced him to death, Rushdie rolled his dice once again. His attempt to ride on two horses has landed him nowhere.

To countenance his secular friends, he in effect refuted his pledge, hardly one week old, not to publish the paperback edition or further translations – he announced on BBC Radio 4's Sunday programme that 'these would go ahead when it could happen safely'. In his efforts to regain the Muslim community's sympathy he gave the glad tidings that he had not only received blessings from the Grand Shaikh of al-Azhar, the 'leader' of the Sunni Muslims of the world, but that he had also been invited by the Government of Egypt to receive these blessings in person, in Cairo. He also tried to appease Iran, by pleading his 'innocence' through the BBC world service Persian programme. Being frustrated in this attempt he tried to belittle the importance of Iran by reference to the Shi'a community, saying that it represents no more than 10 per cent of Muslims and that as such its intransigence matters little.

Rushdie's attempts to mislead the Muslim community were frustrated once again however when the official Egyptian Government spokesman on 1st January, 1991, refuted Rushdie's invitation claim as 'absolutely without foundation'. Confounded by this rebuff from the Egyptian Government and by the Muslim community's rebuke labelling his Islam 'as a ploy to get him off the hook', Rushdie, on Sunday, 6th January, 1991, made further overtures on an Asian radio phone-in programme broadcast by Sunrise Radio. Faced with extremely tough questioning by the callers, Rushdie was obliged to regret his earlier remark to the effect that he wished his book had offended Muslims more. In an obvious bid to placate the Muslim community, he offered to make a monetary contribution to the families of those that had been killed in the 1989 protest demonstrations against his sacrilegious book if a fund were to be set up.

On 17th January, 1991, *The Guardian* published a full-page interview of Rushdie with Dr. Akbar Ahmad, the visiting Iqbal Fellow at Cambridge University, England. Although there was

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Moreover, in withdrawing the book, his 'reputation as a series person in this country and in this civilization would be described and he would no longer be able to vociferously series. Machin rights ranging from Kashmir to Pakistan to asset to British.

and mortantly, the withdrawal of the book could be some but a catastrophic victory for some leaders. It can be seen the withdrawal, in Rushdie's view, 'would be a catastrophic with the would be sometiment of the last two wars look like nothing. He also the last two years look like nothing. He also the damage would last not for a week or two

London (3rd May, 1991) who once again forced Rushdie's conversion and declared that kindig as an apostate who cannot be accepted as a substantial withdrawn the offensive book, Rushdie forced that his learn was a matter of conscience and it is a substantial to question it. He attacked the two

them for her discount 2 coing that they have done so 'under come and to see their pole.' As far as his book is concerned and a "the product of a mixed tradition and seriously intended with of an its wind-awal would be a disaster' and it will 'bring the concerns' back to fever pitch'. He also revealed that on land December he agreed to suspend the paperback edition 'in the same of peace' and not by way of any repentance, as some with may have deduced.

Maint regarded his explanations for not withdrawing the offencine book a totally unacceptable and a clever attempt to online the Maxim mind. Rather than addressing the central we of forthright withdrawal of the book squarely and unequivocally which is a constant source of anguish in the Muslim and against which they have been campaigning ever since its publication, once again the author tried to evade the issue and made it look so complicated. There cannot be any dislogue with Rushdie over the issue whether the book should be withdrawn or not. That the book is highly offensive and the author has committed the crime of abusing the Prophet (sahb al Nabil Sharm al-Rassell is not only maintained by Iran but also by more than 46 member states of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) at the Foreign Ministers' Conference held in Rivadh in March 1989. The fact that almost all Muslim and several non-Musim countries have banned this outrageous book is yet another proof in support of the Muslim demand. As the Muslim community have made clear time and again, far from absolving his sin. Rushdie's crime becomes all the more grave if he claims to be a Muslim and continues to insult the Prophet and Islam through the continued circulation of the book in hardcover and ransiations

It is interesting to note that Marianne Wiggins, Rushdie's wife, in an interview with The Sunday Times (31st March, 1991) accused him of being 'vain and self obsessed'. She said 'the only cause he had promoted in his two years in hiding was himself. While others campaigned in his name for freedom of expression, he was concerned solely with his career'. She further revealed that 'on the eve of war in the Gulf, he was talking of greeting Colonel Gadaff of Libya in an attempt to save his life'. Referring to his tonversion' to Islam, she said 'this is a man who announced his very, very private religious conversion in an extraordinarily public

way and then takes umbrage and exacts an emotional price from anyone who speaks about him in public. He is not the bravest man in the world but will do anything to save his life', she said. There is hardly anything strange in this as in an earlier article in The Times (11th February, 1990) we have seen Robert Harris commenting about an unpleasant smell of money hanging over all this. 'Mr. Rushdie', Harris rightly wrote, 'has made well over flm from The Satanic Verses. To cash in on his predicament by asking exorbitant fees to defend his right to speak does not help his case, especially given the enormous sums already demanded of the British taxpayer for his round-the-clock protection . . . Unfortunately one of the characteristics of his "brilliant polemic" is to drip vitriol on anyone - writers, bishops, journalists, historians, politicians - who dared criticise him. Such raw sensitivity to offence is, to put it mildly, curious in a man who reserves the right to offend 800m Muslims and who cheerily pins on people names like "Mrs. Torture" ' [a reference to Mrs. Thatcher].

However, Rushdie's overtures remain meaningless unless his sacrilegious book is completely withdrawn and Rushdie has proved by his actions that he is a genuine believer in Islam and the Prophet's honour. Otherwise, as a *Newsweek* report puts it, his 'embrace of Islam flummoxed both friend and foe' (14th January 1991, p. 53), and would remain an exercise in futility.

#### The Fatwa and the Law of Sacrilege

For Muslims of all times and all places the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) stands out as a model par excellence — his life (Sira) being the ideal to approximate, his sayings (Ḥadīth) to follow and his practices (Sunna) the paradigm to emulate. Utmost devotion to and fervent love of the Prophet has consistently been a prominent trait of every Muslim, from the Prophet's Companions (Ṣaḥāba) in early Islam to present-day Muslims. Since the Prophet through his word and deed demonstrated what the Divine Will fundamentally is, his example is a basic source of Islam, next only to the Qur'ān. In the Islamic scheme of things, to follow the Prophet is synonymous with obeying God and thus the way for attaining success in the Hereafter.

Of the numerous Qur'anic verses describing the exalted position of the Prophet, a few are quoted below:

- (i) The Prophet is closer to believers than their own selves. (al-Ahzāb 33: 6.)
- (ii) Whoever is an enemy to Allah and His angels and prophets, to Gabriel and Michael, Allah is an enemy to those who reject Faith. (al-Bagara 2: 98.)
- (iii) Those who annoy Allah and His Messenger, Allah has cursed them in this world and in the Hereafter, and has prepared for them a humiliating punishment. (al- Ahzāb 33: 57.)

The Islamic religious texts abound in exhortations to follow and honour the Prophet as much as a Muslim can possibly do. The love of the Prophet is ingrained so deeply and indelibly on a Muslim's heart that any disrespect to him is simply unacceptable, nay unimaginable. And any Muslim would be proud to sacrifice his life, his precious possessions and all that he has in defending the Prophet's honour, should it be demanded of him. Indeed in one of the Traditions of the Prophet, the perfection of faith has been made conditional upon the love of the Prophet which takes precedence over the love of one's parents and even one's own self.

In view of the pivotal position the Prophet holds in both theoretical and practical varieties of Islam, Islamic law prescribes a deterrent penalty – death, for the loathsome crime of abuse or insult hurled at the Prophet (sabb al-Nabī or Shatm al-Rasūl). And this crime is regarded as such a heinous one that, according to some schools of Islamic law, the Shātim (one who abuses the Prophet) cannot be reprieved, even if he repents and resolves not to repeat his crime. The remarkably categorical tenor of the punishment for this offence is worth noting, for in other cases involving murder, the convicted person stands a chance of being pardoned by the victim's heirs.

Against this background, it is understandable why Muslims the world over felt so outraged at the publication of Salman Rushdie's The Satanic Verses. Immediately after the publication of the offensive book in September, 1988, Muslims in Britain and elsewhere launched their campaign against the book under the auspices of the UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs and other representative bodies. This was a clear proof that the book had hurt the feelings of Muslims and they found it not only deeply offensive but sacrilegious. Hence they were justified in demanding

that the book should be withdrawn and a public apology by the publisher and the author be given and the remaining copies be pulped with the undertaking that it would not surface again in any form or language. Exercising their democratic right they protested to the publisher through telephone messages, letters and finally through peaceful and dignified demonstrations followed by memorandum and vigil. Muslims were determined to keep their campaign within the law and not be provoked by any incitement or external interference which was proved by the very fact that there was not a single threat on record to Rushdie or the publisher by the Muslim community prior to the issuance of the farwa by Ayatollah Khomeini on 14th February, 1989.

In the initial period of four months of protest before Rushdie went into hiding. Muslims in Britain were restrained in their resentment against the book and kept their protests within the boundary of the British law and generally remained calm even after the Iranian fativa. However, in a few demonstrations staged by Muslims, some people did shout abuse against Rushdie, but these were in the nature of symbolic outbursts of anger of some individual Muslims which were more in protest against the apathy of the British government in not taking serious note of the Muslim protests than anything else.

Though the timing of Imam Khomeini's fatwā on 14th February, 1989 was a surprise to British Muslims, its substance was not. For, the leaders of the Muslim community and the 'ulama' knew very well that according to Islamic law, abuse and insult of the Prophet (sabb al-Nabī or Shatm al-Rasūl) was a crime, a capital offence punishable by law. This crime is considered as transgressing the limits (hudūd) and is worse than treason which clearly constitutes a hadd offence.

There is some difference of opinion among jurists on the issue whether or not a true repentance of the blasphemer nullifies the death sentence or hadd. According to the Hanafi and Shāfi'ī schools of law, the offender may be given a chance to repent and if he does so sincerely, the sentence may be waived. However, they emphasize that if the blasphemer is found committing the same crime again, his fate is sealed as there is no scope for the reprieve of such a person for a second time. According to the Maliki and Hanbali schools of figh, the offender must be given the hadd punishment irrespective of whether he makes any

repentance (tawba) or not. The same view has been held by Imam Ibn Taimiyya who holds that even if the Shātim al-Rasūl (blasphemer) repents, or converts to Islam in the case of a non-Muslim. he should not be reprieved.27 The position from the Shī'a point of view has been made clear by the fatwa of Imam Khomeini. The government and 'ulama' in Iran have made it clear time and again that even though the author of the sacrilegious book converts and becomes the most pious person on earth, the death sentence pronounced by the Imam cannot be lifted. They have emphasized that repentance or tawba is strictly a matter of the ākhira (Hereafter) depending upon the sincerity of the repentance and acceptance of it by Allah (subhānahū wata'ālā). As far as this world is concerned the crime of sacrilege and profanity should not go unpunished.

It was also common knowledge as prescribed by Islamic law, that the sentence was only applicable where the jurisdiction of Islamic law applies. Moreover, the sentence has to be passed by an Islamic court and executed by the state machinery through the due process of the law. Even in Islamic countries, let alone in non-Muslim lands, individuals cannot take the law into their own hands. The sentence when passed, must be carried out by the state through the usual machinery and not by individuals. Indeed it becomes a criminal act to take the law into one's own hands and punish the offender unless it is in the process of self-defence.<sup>28</sup> Moreover the offender must be brought to the notice of the court and it is the court who should decide how to deal with him. 29 This law applies equally to Muslim as well as non-Muslim territories. Hence, on such clarification from the 'ulama', Muslims in Britain before and after Imam Khomeini's fatwā made it very clear that since Islamic law is not applicable to Britain, the hadd punishment cannot be applied here.

As British citizens, Muslims are subject to British law and they have all along promised to keep their campaign within the framework of the law. It was the British media and people like Kilroy-Silk who provoked the Muslim community and labelled them as violent and bloodthirsty. Despite such provocation, Muslims remained calm and dignified and tried to express their anger and frustration within the framework of the law of the land. However, they have made it clear that as far as the legal position of the fatwā is concerned, they are not in a position to compromise

or condemn it. They will neither take the law into their own hands, nor will they condone violation of the law on British soil. Even the unofficial spokesman of the Iranian revolution, Dr. Kaleem Siddiqi, has clarified more than once that under British law Imam Khomeini's edict cannot be implemented here and he himself would not attempt to kill the blasphemer.

The British and Western media violently abused the Muslim community and did not allow the authentic Muslim viewpoint to be voiced. A smokescreen of vilification and intimidation was created and the false impression was given to the world that the two million Muslims in Britain were up in arms and determined to kill Rushdie, who is not only a British subject, but a great champion of the freedom of expression and liberal values. Once again the power of the media prevailed and falsehood was so skilfully propagated that the British public was mesmerized into believing it. Hardly anybody cared to think that the Muslim community has long been under 'siege' and even their legitimate and democratic demands, such as the establishment of voluntaryaided schools, have not only been refused but frowned upon. Why is it so, Muslims ask, that there are over 2,430 voluntaryaided schools for Catholics, over 2,140 for Anglicans and over 20 for the Jewish community, and not a single voluntary-aided school for Muslims? What else except, perhaps, the policy of discrimination and intimidation can explain this unfortunate situation.

In The Satanic Verses affair, Muslims wanted to take recourse to the court but were told that the law of blasphemy is reserved for Anglicans and that it could not be extended to anybody else let alone to Muslims. Despite this, the British Muslim Action Front took the issue to court. The initial hope notwithstanding, the Muslim community was plainly told that they should not try to interfere with the blasphemy law as there is no way that their grievances can be redressed under British law. It remains to be seen whether the European Court of Human Rights entertains the case and makes any attempt to redress the Muslim grievances.

In one media manoeuvre, it was projected that it was Iran alone that condemned the book and the author and asked for appropriate steps to be taken and no other Muslim country or organization shared this view. It should be noted that long before the Iranian fatwā, the Grand Shaikh of al-Azhar, Shaikh Gad el-Haq Ali Gad el-Haq, in early December 1988 not only condemned the

book as sacrilegious but called on the 46 member organizations of Islamic Conference to take action against this 'distortion of Islamic history'. He also appealed to Islamic organizations in Britain 'to join in taking legal steps to prevent the book's circulation'. Similarly, the Islamic Fiqh (jurisprudence) Council of the Muslim World League in late February 1989 described the language contained in the book as the most repulsive and abhorrent ever directed against Islamic beliefs and called for its global ban. The Council declared that the ideas expressed by the author do not fall within the ambit of freedom of thought but are a vicious attack and violation of all that is sacrosanct and as such a breach of law in all countries that respect the rights of others. Dr. Abdullah Naseef, Secretary General of the Muslim World League, called on the Organization of Islamic Conference to sue the author and publishing houses that print the book.

Although these leading organizations and the OIC Conference in Rivadh (March 1989) did not directly pronounce a fatwā they made it very clear in their deliberations that apostasy and vicious abuse of the Prophet does constitute a capital offence. Rushdie tried to avoid the punishment of apostasy by declaring that he was not a Muslim. However, it is not the crime of apostasy, but Shatm al-Rasūl (blasphemy against the Prophet) to which Rushdie remains accountable. Although, as mentioned earlier, there is some difference of opinion among different schools of Islamic law whether true repentance nullifies the punishment, there is no difference on applying the punishment to a blasphemer whether he is a Muslim or non-Muslim. Indeed the gravity of the crime becomes more serious if the Shātim al-Rasūl (one who abuses the Prophet) happens to be a Muslim and continues to abuse the Prophet and his family through circulating and translating the sacrilegious book.

The only prospect for Rushdie would seem to be true repentance followed by an immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the book from circulation. If there is genuine repentance there should not be any hesitation in offering an unqualified apology to Muslims and seeking forgiveness from God Almighty. As far as the death sentence is concerned, there may be a possibility that if circumstances completely change and the matter is referred to the 'ulamā', they might consider a fresh ruling, especially when the Hanafī and Shāfī'ī schools keep the door of tawbā open. It

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is the domain of the qualified scholars and *mujtahids* alone to pronounce a new judgement if necessary and guide the Muslim community. It is certainly not for the individual or Muslim leaders to lift the sentence, as it is not within their jurisdiction and it was not they who issued the faire in the first place.

#### Notes

- t. Sec. among others. Atam Vetta, 'A contract with the Devil', Impact hormatonal. 2nd February 8th March, 1990, pp. 5-8; Ziauddin Sardar and Merni Wyn Davies. Distorted Imagination: Lessons from the Rushdie Affair, London, 1990, Chapter Siv. Deconstructing Satan', pp. 142-83; Shabbir Akhtar, Be Careful with Muhammad: The Salman Rushdie Affair, London, 1989, pp. 13-80. Malice Ruthven. A Satanic Affair: Salman Rushdie and the Rage of Islam, Loodon, 1989, pp. 16-53; Ali A. Mazrui, The Satanic Verses or A Satanic Novel?: The Moral Dilemmas of the Rushdie Affair, New York, 1989, pp. 1-34.
- For a full exposition of this outrageous story, see pp. 131–41 in this book where full reference to relevant sources has been provided. See also Ziauddin Sardar and Merryl Wyn Davies, op. cit., pp. 147–53.
- 3. Annemane Schimmel, And Muhammad is His Messenger: The Veneration of the Prophet in Islamic Piery. North Carolina, 1985, p. 66; Malise Ruthven, op. cit., p. 87-8. Shabbir Akhtar, op. cit., p. 5; Ali A. Mazrui, op. cit., who quotes the letter by H.V. Ravinder, New York Times, February 26th, 1989, The Week in Review. p. 22. For further details, see Gene R. Thursby, 'Rushdie, Rapal and Religious Controversy in British India', Proceedings of the Eleventh International Symposium on Asian Studies, 1989, Hong Kong, 1990, pp. 423-34. The author also mentions two other blasphemous publications one in Hindi entitled Vichitra Jivan (The Colourful Life: Some Strange and Mysterious Incidents from the Life of Muhammad Sahib), Agra, 1923; and an Urdu essay published in the Amritsar monthly journal Risala-i-Vartman, with the title Sart-Dozakh (A Trip to Hell), May, 1927. Both publications along with the Rangila Ravid were confiscated and banned in British India by the Government.
- 4. James Piscaton, 'The Rushdie Affair and the Politics of Ambiguity', International Affairs, Cambridge, Vol. 66, No. 4, 1990, pp. 267ff.
- 5. The Guardian, 27th February, 1989.
- 6. Ibid.
- 7. Ali A. Mazrui, op. cit., reproduced in Munawar A. Anees, The Kiss of Judas Affairs of a Brown Sahib, Kuala Lumpur, 1989, p. 61.
- 8. Shabbir Akhtar, op. cit., p. 35
- 9. Ziauddin Sardar and Merryl Wyn Davies, op. cit., p. 165.
- 10. M.H. Faruqi, 'Publishing Sacrilege is Not Acceptable', *Impact Interna*uonal, 28th October - 10th November, 1988, pp. 12-14.

- 11. Ziauddin Sardar and Merryl Wyn Davies, op. cit., pp. 157-8.
- 12. Ali A. Mazrui, op. cit., p. 71.
- 13. G. Kaufman, The Independent, 1st March, 1989; Shabbir Akhtar, op. cit., p. 124. For a detailed and insightful account of the suppression of Jim Allen's play Perdition, see. F. el-Manssoury, 'The Stranger-than-Fiction Case of Jim Allen's Suppressed Play', International Journal of Islamic and Arabic Studies, 4/2, 1987, pp. 63-7. It is intriguing to note that the same theatre which under Jewish pressure refused to stage the play Perdition proudly staged the offensive play Inanian Nights by Tariq Ali and Howard Brenton. This too at the height of the Rushdie affair and despite vehement protests from Muslims.
- 14. See Appendix IV, The Position Statement of the UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs.
- 15. The Observer, 2nd April, 1989.
- 16. Shabbir Akhtar, 'Is Freedom Holy to Liberals? Some Remarks on the Purpose of Law' in *Free Speech*. Discussion Papers No. 2, CRE, London, 1990, p. 25.
- 17. Simon Lee, 'Free Speech and Religious Freedom' in Law, Blasphemy and the Multi-Faith Society. Discussion Papers No. 1, CRE, London, 1990, p. 4.
- 18. For a detailed account of this event, see James Tweed's report in New Statesman and Society, London, Vol. 4, No. 138, 1991, p. 19.
- 19. Ibid. Robert Maxwell is not the only example to record. In March 1989, a Chinese publishing house published a book entitled Sexual Customs in which the authors, Ke Le and Sang Ya, preposterously argued that minarets of mosques were phallic symbols, domes represented female breasts and the main purpose of a pilgrim's visit to Makka is to commit bestiality with camels. Following demonstrations and strong protests from Chinese Muslims, the Chinese government immediately banned the book and brought the saga to a peaceful conclusion (see for details, report in the national newspapers, also Shabbir Akhtar, Be Careful with Muhammad, p. 125).

In May 1991, Sa'id Habib, an Árab columnist of the London-based newspaper Al-'Arab outraged the Muslim community by impudently comparing Saddam Hussein with the Prophet, some of his Companions and the Prophet Jesus. As soon as a Muslim delegation under the auspices of the UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs met the columnist and editor of the newspaper, they realized their mistake and immediately offered their unqualified apology for unwittingly offending the feelings of Muslims. The columnist not only resigned from his post, but published an apology in the same newspaper thereby closing the door of further speculation and misunderstanding (see Al-'Arab, 8th May, 1991; also the press release of UKACIA, 10th May, 1991).

- 20. Bhikhu Parekh, 'The Rushdie Affair and the British Press: Some Salutary Lessons', in *Free Speech*, Report of a Seminar, Discussion Papers No. 2, CRE, London, 1990, p. 65.
- 21. John Michell, Rushdie's Insult, London, 1989, p. 5.

- 22. Bhikhu Parekh, ibid., p. 62. M.H. Faruqi, 'The Author as the Stooge', Impact International, 23rd February-8th March, 1990, p. 17.
- 22A. In his letter of 29th August 1991 to the Editors of this book, Mr. Liaqat Hussain has rejected this account thus:

Tam deeply concerned at the interpretation you have given to the book burning incident in Bradford on the 14 January 1989.

For your information, at the occasion of the book burning, the large bulk of national media was not present, and most specifically neither of the T.V. channels were present. The photographs showing the burning of the book that subsequently appeared in the national dailies was taken by a local free-lance photographer. The film clips showing the book burning which were broadcast by the main T.V. channels in this country and worldwide were from a video film commissioned by the Bradford Council for Mosques. The C.F.M. permitted the use of its privately commissioned video by T.V. channels on a request basis. Later C.F.M. sold the rights of the film to a T.V. Consortium. We have evidence to support this.

Please note that the burning of the book in Bradford was entirely the decision of Bradford Council for Mosques without any kind of external prompting by anyone. The Bradford Council for Mosques takes full responsibility for this incident.

- 23. Bhikhu Parekh, ibid., p. 62.
- 24. Malise Ruthven, A Satanic Affair, London, 1990, p. 131.
- 25. Bhikhu Parekh, ibid., pp. 71-2.
- 26. Indeed, later on, when the Muslim community advised the two Imams to disassociate themselves from Rushdie's so-called conversion to Islam and declare categorically that his conversion was not genuine, they did so on Friday, 3rd May, 1991 before a large congregation at the Central Mosque, London. They not only apologized for their mistake in witnessing the ceremony of Rushdie's conversion to Islam but clearly said that 'what Salman Rushdie has done [by embracing Islam] has not changed the previous judgement on him as an apostate for he has expressed no real and honest repentance translated into good deeds' (see the report in The Independent, 3rd and 4th May, 1991).
- 27. For a detailed analysis of the viewpoint of different schools of Islamic law on this issue see Qādī 'lyād, Al-Shifā' bi-ta' rīf Ḥuqūq al-Muṣṭafā, English tr. by A. A. Bewley, Muhammad, Messenger of Allah: Ash-Shifa of Qadi 'lyad (Granada, 1992) and Shaikh al-Islām Ibn Taimiyya, al-Ṣārim al-Mastāla' alā Shātim al-Rasāl, Ist edition, Hyderabad, Deccan, n.d.; Ibn 'Ābidīn, Ḥāshiya Radd al-Muhtār, Dār al-Īsit, 1979 and 'Abd al-Qādir 'Awda, al-Tashrī' al-Jinā'ī al-Islāmī, Vol. I, Beinu, nd. For an Orientalist's detailed response to the fatwā and related issues, see Bemard Lewis, 'Behind the Rushdie Affair', American Scholar (Washington, D.C.), Spnīng, 1991, pp. 185-96.
- 28. If a Muslim driven by his zeal to protect the honour of the Prophet takes the law into his own hands and kills the blasphemer, the Islamic law of qiṣāṣ or punishment for deliberate murder will not apply to him. He will however be punished for taking the law into his own hands and the Islamic court will decide what punishment should be meted out to such an offender.
- 29. However Islamic law allows Muslim governments to seek extradition of the one abusing the Prophet under the international law of extradition of criminals.

#### CHAPTER 2

## Salman Rushdie: The Man and His Mind

"My Theme is Fanaticism"

by Salman Rushdie

Excerpts from his interview with Principal Correspondent, Madhu Jain.

Q. When did you actually begin The Satanic Verses?

- A. Parts of the novel have been in my head since I first began to study Islamic history at the university 20 years ago. But I started work on the book in early 1984. I stopped after my first draft. I wasn't very happy with it and the Nicaragua trip came as a godsend. It gave me the chance to get away from my own internal situation. When I returned the problems jamming me had gone away.
- Q. The novel appears to be quite a fierce critique of Islamic fanaticism . . . .
- A. Actually, one of my major themes is religion and fanaticism. I have talked about the Islamic religion because that is what I know the most about. But the ideas about religious faith and the nature of religious experience and also the political implications of religious extremism are applicable with a few variations to just about any religion. In the beginning and the end of the novel there are other kinds of fundamentalism also. . . .

Q. Some of the names you use are straight out of the Book, based on real characters in Islamic tradition; but others are made up. Why did you do that?

A. I have changed names. I have given the name of an Egyptian temple, Abu Simbel, to the leader of Mecca. . . .

... The book is really about the fact that an idea or a new thing in the world must decide whether to compromise or not. Beyond that, the image out of which the book grew was of the prophet going to the mountain and not being able to tell the difference between the angel and the devil. . . .

Q. Do you fear a backlash from the mullahs?

A. Even Shame was attacked by fundamentalist Muslims. I cannot censor. I write whatever there is to write.

Source: India Today (New Delhi), 15th September 1988 - "My Theme is Fanaticism" '.

#### Read 'Satanic Verses' Before Condemning It

#### by Salman Rushdie

Dear Rajiv Gandhi: On Oct. 5, the Indian Finance Ministry announced the banning of my novel, "The Satanic Verses," under Section 11 of the Indian Customs Act. Many people around the world will find it strange that it is the Finance Ministry that gets to decide what Indian readers may or may not read. But let that pass, because at the end of the notification of the ban an even stranger statement appeared.

The ministry - I am quoting from the Press Trust of India's report - "added that the ban did not detract from the literary and artistic merit of Rushdie's work." To which I can only reply: Thanks for the good review.

The book was banned after representations by two or three Muslim politicians, including Syed Shahabuddin and Khurshid Alam Khan, both members of Parliament. These persons, whom I do not hesitate to call extremists, even fundamentalists, have attacked me and my novel while stating that they had no need actually to read it. That the government should have given in to such figures is profoundly disturbing.

A further official statement was brought to my notice. This explained that "The Satanic Verses" had been banned as a pre-emptive measure. Certain passages had been identified as susceptible to distortion and misuse, presumably by unscrupulous religious fanatics and such. The banning order had been issued to prevent this misuse. Apparently, my book is not deemed blasphemous or objectionable in itself, but is being proscribed for, so to speak, its own good!

This really is astounding. It is as though, having identified an innocent person as a likely target for assault by muggers or rapists, you were to put that person in jail for protection. This is no way, Mr. Gandhi, for a free society to behave. Clearly, your government is feeling a little ashamed of itself and, Sir, it has much to be ashamed about. It is not for nothing that just about every

leading Indian newspaper has deplored the ban.

It is not for nothing that such eminent writers as Kingsley Amis, Harold Pinter and Tom Stoppard have joined International PEN and India's association of publishers and book sellers in condemning the decision. The right to freedom of expression is at the foundation of any democratic society, and at present, all over the world, Indian democracy is becoming something of a laughingstock.

When Syed Shahabuddin and his fellow self-appointed guardians of Muslim sensibilities say that "no civilized society" should permit the publication of a book like mine, they have got things backward. The question raised by the book's banning is precisely whether India, by behaving in this fashion, can any more lay claim

to the title of a civilized society.

Let us try to distinguish truth from falsehood in this matter. Like my zealous opponents, you will probably not have read "The Satanic Verses." So let me explain a few simple things. I am accused of having "admitted" that the book is a direct attack on Islam. I have admitted no such thing, and deny it strongly. The section of the book in question (and let us remember that the book is not actually about Islam, but about migration, metamorphosis, divided selves, love, death, London and Bombay) deals with a prophet - who is not called Muhammad - living in a highly fantastical city made of sand (it dissolves when water falls upon it).

He is surrounded by fictional followers, one of whom happens to bear my own first name. Moreover, this entire sequence happens in a dream, the fictional dream of a fictional character. an Indian movie star, and one who is losing his mind, at that How much further from history could one get?

In this dream sequence I have tried to offer my view of the phenomenon of revelation and the birth of a great world religion; my view is that of a secular man for whom Islamic culture has been of central importance all his life.

Can the Finance Ministry really be saying that it is no longer permissible in modern supposedly secular India, for literature to treat such themes? If so, things are more serious than I had believed. From where I sit, Mr Gandhi, it looks very much as if your government has become unable or unwilling to resist pressure from more or less any extremist religious grouping; that, in short, it is the fundamentalists who now control the political agenda.

You know, as I know, that the real issue is the Muslim vote. I deeply resent my book being used as a political football; what should matter to you more than my resentment is that you come out of this looking not only Philistine and anti-democratic but opportunistic.

Mr. Prime Minister, I can't bring myself to address finance ministries about literature. In my view, this is now a matter between you and me. I ask you this question: What sort of India do you wish to govern? Is it to be an open or a repressive society?

Your action in the matter of "The Satanic Verses" will be an important indicator for many people around the world. If you confirm the ban, I'm afraid I, and many others, will have to assume the worst. If, on the other hand, you should admit your government's error and move swiftly to correct it. I will be the first to applaud your honorable deed.

[This widely published letter appeared in October 1988.]

Source: Illustrated Weekly of India - 'Please, Read 'Satanic Verses' Before Condemning It'. (Italics ours.)

## 'Simon Rushton' aka Salman Rushdie

Kashmiri ancestry, born in Bombay, a pale-skinned boy arrives at a Rugby public school at the age of 13. His father, Anis Rushdie, had brought him up 'in a very Anglophile and Anglocentric way'. Pale-skinned, back home he 'could easily pass for white among his compatriots', but Rugby was to prove a terrible shock to his 'very English obsession'.

He did not know how to eat the kipper in his breakfast. Everyone is watching and no one tells him how to handle this spiky fish. He takes a piece and chokes on bones. 'Suddenly in England I became Indian.' Not that he wanted to. Educated in a Bombay missionary school, he had come to England to shed his 'Indianness' and not to be told that no matter how pale your

skin you are a 'b . . . . y Indian'.

This fishy initiation (apparently he had had no trouble with pork, ham or bacon) was to produce an everlasting scar on the young boy, Salman Rushdie's personality. He was determined to 'show them all' and his career has since been a continuous strip-tease, from soft to hard to harder and ever harder porn. He will not stop as long as the music and footlights were on. He will not only do what the Romans do, he would out-Roman them. He was also out to take revenge: on himself and his peers. 'Like in any American Jewish novel', his way of revenge was 'to be three times as clever'. And dirty!

Rushdie mastered the artless art of eating kipper and went on to develop his 'snobbish' and 'conservative' childhood personality. In 1965 he moved to King's, Cambridge. 'It was a very good time to be at Cambridge, 1965 to 1968. It started with sex and drugs and rock 'n' roll and ended with les evenements. I ceased to be a conservative under the influence of Vietnam war and dope,'

Rushdie told Brian Appleyard.

Little has been said about his family background. From Rushdie's account, his father, Anis, had been a businessman who had inherited 'quite a lot of money and spent the rest of his life losing it'. When he died last year, apparently not quite happy with his celebrity son, there was little left in the bank. The son admits to having had a sometimes bloody relationship with his father and sharing a bad temper with him.

After graduating, Rushdie went on a visit to Pakistan. His parents had moved to Karachi for 'all kinds of terrible reasons' and 'half reasons'. Like finding husbands for my sisters', because 'they were beginning to sense discrimination in India'. Rushdie had been in England for seven years. 'He was beginning to lose his grip on his homeland' and 'felt nothing for Pakistan. In England he still felt like an alien'. Pakistan seemed worth trying.

The visit ended in dismay and frustration and he returned with a badly hurt ego. 'Full of Cambridge confidence' Rushdie had tried his luck with both television and journalism, but they would not let him use the word 'sex' or use pig as a character, he says. His first impressions of Pakistan had been rejected by the press censors. It must have been in terrible bad taste because those were the libertine days of Yahya Khan. Sad and rejected, Rushdie returned 'home'. He had one more cause to disprove that he was neither an Indian nor a Pakistani.

Rushdie now wanted to be a writer; not being one as yet, he earned his living by acting in fringe theatre, at the Oval House in Kennington, and by doing casual work with advertising agencies. We do not know about his theatrical achievements but in advertising 'he tended to submit more or less the same copy over and over again. He was felt to be heavy-going'. Or so they said, although he was also credited with coining the line 'Naughty but nice' for cream cakes. The slogan was rejected by the manufacturers because it seemed to link cream with obesity.

(A letter in *The Sunday Times*, 9th October 1988, said: The phrase is some 100 years old, and of American origin. The song entitled "It's naughty but it's nice" was popularised by Minnie Schult in the 1880s, and the catchphrase itself reached Britain soon after.)

Acting and experimenting with words, Rushdie met an English girl, Clarissa Luard. She had been working in what her 'mother would call fun things' - fashion, rock and pop. At that time both Rushdie and Luard 'were living with others' and 'for two years, they conducted a secret affair until, finally, they moved in together into a house which belonged to Mrs Luard. They married in 1976.

Enter a lodger, Liz Calder, who worked in publishing at Gollancz. She mothered Rushdie's first published novel, *Grimus* in 1975. It proved a flop receiving dismissive reviews, but Rushdie

has not yet 'showed them all'. Nor did he intend to give up. He finished Midnight's Children in 1979. Calder had moved to Cape.

Published in 1981, the *Children* was an instant success. You did not need a Kipling, a Foster or even Katherine Mayo, Colonel Blimp himself had arrived. An Indian and a more 'authentic' Colonel Blimp. The *Children* won Rushdie the \$10,000 Booker Prize. He had been discovered and he had been launched.

There was a little mishap though about *Midnight's Children*. The late Indian Prime Minister Mrs Indira Gandhi had to be given a public apology by both Rushdie and his publishers in answer to her libel action. They also paid costs and gave an undertaking to remove from all future editions under their control the passages objected to by her.

Rushdie tried to do better in *Shame*. He took an aim on Pakistan, its political characters, its culture and its religion. Some you enjoyed, some you loathed and much you did not understand. Rushdie's style is dense and its import as clothed as a strip-tease dancer. There exists in London something called The Page 15 Club. It consists of literary editors, journalists, academics, novelists who have got no further than page 15 with Rushdie's books.'

Yet these things mattered little because he had been given the certificate of success. He had hoped to win the Booker Prize once more. He was cross when he did not and set about putting together his Satanic Verses. Combining all his skills in writing, acting and imagining and remembering his credo 'I will show them all', he has achieved an enormous success in outrage and sacrilege. If he does not get the Booker Prize, a second time this year, he can look forward to winning the Nobel Prize, next year or the year after that. There is no reason to assume that he is incapable of producing something, yet more filthy than his Satanic Verses.

Rushdie - 'His detractors anglicise his name to Simon Rushton' -has also been mobile with his women. The marriage with Clarissa Luard, mother of his nine-year-old son, Zafar, 'actually ended' in 1984, although they were formally divorced in 1987. He left Liz Calder who had launched him as a published novelist as well as his original agent Deborah Rogers.

From Cape he went to Viking-Penguin who will give him \$850,000 for two novels as an advance against royalties.' Rushdie also sacked his literary agent in America, Elaine Markson and

when he with Andrew Wylie. Leaving Clarissa, he had a street with an American writer, Robyn Davidson and is current with an American novelist, Marianne Wiggins.

Reside thinks there are two Salman Rushdies walking around and frequently when I meet people. I have to kill to the the know before they can see him'. Two into only the sale of the change and Gibreel Farishta, implying that produce there is no coil and no good either. That is what The Salami Views is all about.

1 Some Revide: 'Caught between two worlds' by Lloyd Grown Leader 18th May 1986, 2. 'Fishing for Salman' by Mark Lawson 18th May 1986, 2. 'Fishing for Salman' by Mark Lawson 18th Lawson 1

Resident and Selman Rushdic'.

#### The Satanic Mind

Throughout the Affair, particularly after Imam Khomeinis Sales Rushdie was the focus of the Western media Water besid, no matter how frivolous, was reported dutifully on prime time TV and figured quite prominently in the British As to the genesis of The Satanic Verses Rushdie offered de contradictory, rather opportunistic stances. Before the mes over its sacrilegious contents, Rushdie took great delight and make in having taken up Islam and fundamentalism in his more for he knew the most about it'. This stance is reflected at be a be mierview with the Bandung File, a Channel 4 TV recorded on 27th January, 1989, that is before Imam Land s fative but broadcast on 14th February, 1989, the day Roman issued his fatwa. In his reply to the question how be based on the Quranic text or Islamic history. Paste lad the andactiv to say: 'Almost entirely. Almost making in these sections the Chapter in The Satanic Verson starts from an historical or quasi-historical For a a leaguan sudving Islam he had discovered in the are of Mahammad (peace be upon him) his 'brief flirtation with a possible compromise about monotheism. And here is how Resolve the historian pieces together what transpired between the Prophet and Gibreel, the archangel who brought him revela-Then Gibreel comes to Mohammad and tells him that these verses are Satanic verses and should be removed - and here are the real verses - he forgave him. He [Gibreel] said, "Never it's understandable, things like this have happened before. This great historian does not, however, indicate how he managed to retrieve this dialogue between the archangel and the Prophet after 1400 years. He is, however, quick enough to andem his critics for such fanciful and pernicious ravings in the name of history. For he says: 'It seems that Gibreel is more tolerant than some of these people attacking the book'. Quite unequivocally he once again states the historical origin of The Solution Verses rooted in Islamic history: 'At the very beginning of Islam you find a conflict between the sacred text and the profane text, between revealed literature and imagined literature . . . So that's what I was doing, exploring'.

He was brazen enough to claim: 'I get letters every day from Muslims who do like the book.' He denounced the 'mullahs' for stage-managing the protest: 'I knew that very theocratic, medievalist Islam that is being pushed through the mosques was not likely to take very kindly to the book I was writing, but I didn't foresee a reaction on this scale. If you don't believe, and I don't, that some kind of disembodied supreme being sent an angel to dictate a book to a seventh century businessman named Mohammed, you are in trouble. He said if he had known that this book was going to produce such a reaction by Muslims, he would have penned a stronger and more 'critical' book on Islam. What he meant was that he would have gone even further in his insult and mockery of Islamic sanctities.

After the fatwa one notes a sea-change in Rushdie's position. Take this recanting of his word as an example: 'I recognise that many Muslims have felt shocked and pained, too.' Abandoning the self-appointed role of a historian of Islam in writing The Science Verses, he started invoking the privileges and protection of an artist. Look at his version of the freedom of expression: What is freedom of expression? Without the freedom to offend, it ceases to exist... Muslims are accustomed to satire as anyone

else, why must a novel be proscribed for doing the same?' Entitled 'In Good Faith', Rushdic's piece is full of vendetta against things Islamic Here is his harangue, distorting, discrediting and dismissing the Islamic law: '... I would ask the following question: are all the rules laid down at a religion's origin immutable for ever? How about the penalties for prostitution (stoning to death) or thieving (mutilation)? How about the prohibition of homosexuality? How about the Islamic law of inheritance, which allows a widow to inherit only an eighth of share, and which gives to sons twice as much as it does to daughters? What of the Islamic law of evidence, which makes a woman's testimony worth only half that of a man? Are these too, to be given unquestioning respect.' It is followed by the declaration: 'I am a modern, and modernist. urban man, accepting uncertainty as the only constant, change as the only sure thing. I believe in no god, and have not done so since I was a young adolescent ... To put it as simply as possible: I am not a Muslim." Then there was another somersault in that on 24th December 1990, he announced his 'embracing' of Islam in these words: '... religion for me has always meant Islam ... I am able now to say that I am a Muslim.'4

#### Notes and References

- 1. The complete text of this interview is published in *The Rushdie File* edited by Lisa Appignanesi and Sara Maitland, pp. 27–31.
- 2. The Devil Made Him Do It', Newsweek, 6th February, 1989.
- 3. 'In Good Faith', The Independent on Sunday, 4th February, 1990.
- 4 Why I have Embraced Islam', The Times, 28th December, 1990

#### Divorce for Rushdie

#### by Graham Lord

Salman Rushdie is "very, very depressed" by his two-year captivity, says his estranged wife, American novelist Marianne Wiggins, who tells me she and Rushdie will divorce later this year.

"He's so depressed, extremely down. He's isolated himself from his former friends and he's developed a very thin skin recently and can't take criticism.

"The man's career is incredibly operatic and he's very volatile

She denies that she now has a new man but says: "The rumours are rife about Salman, that he has several new women friends — and why not? . . . "

One friend who speaks to Rushdie once a week on the telephone admits: "He's not in too good a shape. He's far worse than he was and in greater difficulties now than he's ever been. . . . ."

Source: Sunday Express, 24th March 1991 - 'Divorce Ahead for Rushdie After His Wife's Year of Pain'.

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# CHAPTER 3

# In Defence of Sacrilege

# Muslims - Nazis of Britain?

Il members of Britain's community of some two million Muslims do not want to read Salman Rushdie's novel The Satunic Verses, all they have to do is abstain from buying it or taking it out of the local library. They should not seek to impose their feelings about its contents—or, more probably, what they have been told about them—on the rather larger non-Islamic part of the population. Their campaign to have the book banned, on the grounds that it blasphemes Islam, led to a demonstration over the weekend in Bradford in which, following the example of the Inquisition and Hitler's National Socialists, a large crowd of Muslims burnt some copies of the book. . . .

Source OThe Independent, 16th January 1989 - Dangers of a Muslim

# Not the Book but the Muslim Protest is Distasteful

It members of Britain's Moslem community wish to pay £12.95 for the privilege of burning a copy of Mr Salman Rushdie's The Satanic Verses in the privacy of their own homes, that is a matter for them. Many Christians who have struggled with Mr Rushdie's impenetrable novels will warm their hands at the fireside. But the

In Defence of Sacrilege

# Islam's Gangster Tactics

## by Anthony Burgess

Evidently, there is a political element in the attack on *The* Satanic Verses which has killed and injured good if obstreperous Muslims in Islamabad, though it may be dangerously blasphemous to suggest it. The Ayatollah Khomeini is probably within his self-elected rights in calling for the assassination of Salman Rushdie, or of anyone else for that matter, on his own holy ground. To order outraged sons of the Prophet to kill him, and the directors of Penguin Books, on British soil is tantamount to a jihad. It is a declaration of war on citizens of a free country, and as such it is a political act. It has to be countered by an equally forthright, if less murderous, declaration of defiance.

Islam, like Genevan Calvinism, accepts the theocratic principle. The law of the state is the law of God: there are no crimes of purely secular import. If a thief is caught, he must suffer the severance of the hand that stole because the Koran says so. (The Koran also recommends mercy, a grace on which Khomeini insists rather little).

Great Britain has allowed the secular virtue of tolerance to prevail over religious rigour. This explains why our Muslims are permitted freely to exercise their faith so long as its code of behaviour does not conflict with civil law. We want no hands cut off here. For that matter, we want no ritual slaughter of livestock, though we have to put up with it.

I gain the impression that few of the protesting Muslims in Britain know directly what they are protesting against. Their Imams have told them that Mr Rushdie has published a blasphemous book and must be punished. They respond with sheeplike docility and wolflike aggression. They forget what the Nazis did to books — or perhaps they do not: after all, some of their co-religionists approved of the Holocaust — and they shame a free country by denying free expression through the vindictive agency of bonfires.

They have no right to call for the destruction of Mr Rushdie's book. If they do not like secular society, they must fly to the arms of the Ayatollah or some other self-righteous guardian of strict Islamic morality. They cannot have the privileges of a theocratic

public campaign to expunge the offending work from the bookshops of Britain has aroused the widest dismay and distaste. We may not be able to follow all that Mr Rushdie writes, but we defend absolutely his right to be read. It is doubly regrettable, therefore, that a chain of the size and influence of W H Smith should announce that it is withdrawing the book from two of its shops, except on special order.

Booksellers are perfectly at liberty to decline to stock books they themselves find blasphemous. But Sir Simon Hornby, for Smith's, makes no claim on that score. Nor is it a case that public appetite for the novel is slackening, since it continues to appear in the fiction best-seller lists, and we do not imagine that its presence there will be impeded by the present furore. W H Smith's talk of the risks to its premises and staff suggests, instead, the prospect of some kind of Islamic iihad against its shop windows.

The scenes in Bradford over the weekend presented an image of Moslem sentiment in Britain of the most unhelpful possible kind to race relations. In reality, we know that it is atypical. We note the hard work and enterprising spirit of the Moslem minority, their piety and devotion to family values. But the religious intolerance displayed by some factions is ominous. Salman Rushdie will not be the greatest author to provoke a religious backlash: compare the reaction, in 1643, to Milton's Tetrachordon, advocating divorce and polygamy. Islamic religious leaders have two obligations: first, to maintain a sense of proportion about any perceived threat to their religion posed by Mr Rushdie; and second, to recall that, as citizens or residents of this country, they have a responsibility to respect the British tradition of free speech, not to react in the fashion of the ayatollahs. W H Smith has the protection of the law. If it wishes to maintain the honourable name of booksellers in the community, then it has a duty to sell books that are lawful, and in demand from a far larger section of the community than that which seeks to banish them.

Source: O The Daily Telegraph, 17th January 1989 – 'Right to be Read'. (Italics ours.)

state in a society which, as they knew when they entered it, grants total tolerance to all faiths so long as those faiths do not conflict with that very principle of tolerance.

What applies to the United Kingdom applies equally to the United States. What a secular society thinks of the prophet Mohamed is its own affair, and reason, apart from law, does not permit aggressive interference of the kind that has brought shame and death to Islamabad.

Logic would seem to demand that the whole corpus of anti-Islamic literature in English should be placed in the hands of incendiary Muslims: the Guild Plays of the Middle Ages, for instance, in which Mohamed appears — as in *The Satanic Verses*—as Mahound, an atheistic force loosely identified with both King Herod and the Devil. If Muslims want to attack the Christian or humanistic vision of Islam contained in our literature, they will find more vicious travesties than Mr Rushdie's.

They had better look, for instance, at Edward Fitzgerald's Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyām. But nobody is interested in this issue historically or philosophically.

There is a little too much political opportunism in this picking on a recently published book which neither Iran nor Pakistan would read even if it could. One doubts the sincerity of protest that is secondhand and unjustified by argument, thought or anything more intellectual than the throwing of stones and the striking of matches.

It is not for me to question the manner in which Islamic theoracy conducts affairs on its own ground. I feel about Khomeini as I felt about Hitler before 1939: I may not like his domestic policy, but I have no grounds, other than those of common humanitarianism, for protest. I am within my rights, I think, in regretting that both his brand of Islamic fundamentalism and the equally intolerant fundamentalism of the American South have remembered nothing of the medieval subtleties of Averroes on the one hand and St Thomas Aquinas on the other. Neither religion used to be as crude as this. And I am even more within my rights in inveighing against an aggressiveness which denies to a free society its privilege of allowing its citizens to speak their minds without fear of brutal reprisal.

I do not think that even our British Muslims will be eager to read that great vindication of free speech, which is John Milton's

Areopagitica. Oliver Cromwell's Republic proposed muzzling the press, and Milton replied by saying, in effect, that the truth must declare itself by battling with falsehood in the dust and heat. Mohamed is presumably great enough to report a spiritual victory over misrepresentation by both theologians and novelists. Islam once did intellectual battle. Now it prefers to draw blood. It seems to have lost its major strength only to resort to the tactics of the gangster. This is unworthy of a major religion.

One wonders if even major religions, however sincerely held, should be allowed to prevail over those secular beliefs that no longer owe anything to theology – tolerance, charity, a sense of humour and a great deal of goodwill. There is something not very likeable about a faith that is so quick to order assassination.

I would much prefer that Khomeini argued rationally with the infidel West in the manner of the great medieval Arabs. But, instead of arguing, he declared a holy war against argument. His insolence is an insult to Islam.

Source: ©The Independent, 16th February 1989 - 'Islam's Gangster Tactics'. (Italics ours.)

# Unite Against Islam!

## by Norman Stone

... Islam is the religion, after all, of the ferocious Ayatollahs, of suicide-bombings and hostage-taking; of the Afghan sects, who, no doubt, will soon be meting revenge on collaborators with the Soviets. Salman Rushdie has learned this, in a very hard way....

The Mahdi is the enemy of mankind, and particularly of womankind, and we need all the allies we can get. The world as a whole must unite to make sure that fundamentalist Islam does not get away with it. . . .

Source: ©The Daily Telegraph, 19th February 1989 - 'We Need Russian Help Against Islam'.

# Limits of Tolerance

There are few more difficult tasks, even or perhaps especially in a liberal democracy, than to define the limits of tolerance. A year after the Ayatollah Khomeini first pronounced sentence on Mr Salman Rushdie, the difficulties for the author, his publishers and our own society have become no easier to reconcile. Mr Rushdie himself, with his huge conceit, fastidious distaste for That cherite Britain and impenetrable literary style, is an implausible hero for any save the likes of Mr Harold and Lady Antonia Pinter. Yet to almost all of us, Mr Rushdie's right to publish his book was, and remains, beyond dispute. If has been dismaying to behold British Moslems publicly echoing the murderous threats of the Iranians. Only a month or two ago, several hundred Moslems gathered in Walthamstow to vote that the death sentence against the author should "remain in place". One Dr Kalim Siddiqui has been strongly and openly associated with the call for Mr Rushdie's death.

To many of us, it has been acutely dismaying to see Moslems making threats in a fashion which, there can be little doubt, would have caused them to be prosecuted for incitement were they members of the more extreme white groups, such as the National Front. By adopting a "softly, softly" approach, the Government and the police have plainly sought to avoid a head-on confrontation. Yet it seems important to leave minority groups in Britain in no doubt about the limits of tolerance for behaviour of this sort. If Moslem fundamentalism, and its bloodier manifestations, gain any hold in this country, they will have to be suppressed, employing the full vigour of the laws which were introduced to protect minority communities from racial harassment.

We may all wish that Mr Rushdie had not written his book. But he has done so, and we should continue to defend his rights, as Mrs Thatcher and her Government have done with such credit. British publishers should encourage Penguin to proceed with the paperback edition. To flinch from publication now would be a surrender to those forces of fanaticism with which we cannot compromise, if we are to sustain the traditional values and licence of our own society. It is those values to which British Moslems must subscribe, however unwillingly, if they are to play a full part

in British life, as we all wish that they should.

Source: ©The Daily Telegraph, 6th February 1990 - 'Limits of Tolerance'. (Italics ours.)

# An Islamicist's Nightmare!

# by Daniel Easterman

Islamic law is not democratic: it is a system rooted in a series of supposedly infallible and unchallengeable texts, established by an elite body of scholars long since dead, and today interpreted and implemented by a similar elite. Shi'ite law is, if anything, less democratic than its Sunni equivalent: mujtahids achieve their positions, not by election, but by scholastic achievement....

What would happen, then, if the law did allow the Muslim case against *The Satanic Verses* . . . fundamentalist zeal could draw up an ever-expanding list of additional titles for the attention of the courts. . . .

Now, what does that mean? For one thing, it means that books by Muslim heretics could be cited as blasphemous and banned in Britain. Studies by Muslim scholars challenging received wisdom about the Qur'an, hadith, Prophet, or law would meet the same censorship here as they already do in Iran, Saudi Arabia, or Egypt. Books by Baha'is – a group universally hated throughout the Muslim world – could be taken off the shelves in London or Edinburgh. Academic works on Islam would be scrutinized and, where found wanting, removed from university reading lists or libraries or bookshops. Older European texts deemed unflattering to Islam or Muhammad – Dante, Gibbon, Carlyle, Voltaire – could appear in bowdlerized editions.

Remember, this is not paranoia on my part: books like these are already banned in most Muslim countries on the grounds of blasphemy. Why on earth would anyone stop at *The Satanic Verses* if they had the power to regulate anything and everything written about Islam? . . .

Source: Index on Censorship, 4/90, pp. 9-11 - 'A Sense of Proportion'.

# Rushdie Shemozzle is Attempt to Blackmail

Mary Kenny was last week surely mistaken for once. The Rushdie shemozzle is not just a matter of freedom of expression versus censorship. Islam is trying to blackmail us, with its preposterous death sentence and hints that hostages might be freed and diplomatic relations be restored if we ceased to protect Mr Rushdie from its hit-men or at least consigned his book to oblivion.

Why should Muslims expect their religion to be protected from anack? Christianity is frequently assailed, sometimes blasphemously, but we do not respond by threatening murder and burning books and bookshops. Indeed we expect our religion to be spoken ill of, since Jesus himself warned us that it would be. The proper reaction, we know, is to pity the blasphemer and pray for his salvation.

The lesson of the Rushdie affair is that it was unwise to let Muslim communities establish themselves in our midst. People talk glibly about a "multicultural society", but the expression is a contradiction in terms. since social cohesion depends on cultural consensus. Introduce alien cultures resistant to assimilation and you ask for trouble.

Society splits up into culturally disparate communities that are only held together by the State. Conflict may lie dormant for a time, but then something happens that puts the cat among the pigeons. The publication of Mr Rushdie's book was such a happening, and it let the cat out of the bag — in more senses than one.

G.B. Bentley, 5 The Cloisters, Windsor Castle, Berkshire

Source: ©The Sunday Telegraph, 24th June 1990 – 'Rushdie Shemozzle is Attempt to Blackmail'. (Italics ours.)

# The Philistines' Chapter and Verse

#### by Hilary Mantel

what is more important is that without requiring any guarantees of Rushdie's safety, our government has recently resumed diplomatic relations with Iran. That is to say, it has shaken hands with the would-be murderers. Its attitude has always been suspect; now it is shameful. . . .

And the rest of us, who thought that as we were British and under the protection of the law we were therefore free to speak and write as we liked, have been properly put in our place. "From now on, no one will ever dare to insult our holy prophet nor our dear Islamic values."

Source: ©The Independent on Sunday, 30th December 1990 - 'The Philistines' Chapter and Verse'.

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# CHAPTER 4

# Voices of Civility

## Deliberate Provocation

by J.P. Dixit et al.

Two important arguments against the banning of Salman Rushdie's book "the Satanic Verses," are: (1) The idea that individual expression in art cannot have any social and judicial limitation, and less seriously, (2) That those who support the ban have not read the book.

To take the second point first, do we know enough about the book already to form a judgement, perhaps not of literary and other merits, but of its ability to outrage the sentiments of all who believe in Islam?

The author is quite clear, "Actually, one of my major themes is religion and fanaticism. I have talked about Islamic religion because that is what I know best." (India Today, Sept. 15, 1988). How does he talk about this religion? Its founder is named Mahound. Mr. Rushdie has not invented this name. This was the name given to Prophet Muhammad by his European detractors as a term of abuse (Ma from Mahomet added to and hound) used frequently in various European ecshatologies as a creature belonging to the lowest depths of Hell, as the devil himself.

How has Rushdie treated the other pillars of the Islamic faith? Ayesha, the youngest wife of the Prophet and the one who is regarded as one of the highest authorities of tradition, is shown, in the words of Madhu Jain (India Today, ibid) as "clad only in butterflies" leading "an entire village, lemming-like into the Arabian Sea." The Ka'aba, regarded by the Muslims as the only

# The West's Arrogant Disdain

## by Nicholas Ashford

Freedom of expression, like all freedoms, carries its Own responsibilities and conditions. In a civilised society we try, either by imposing the minimum of restrictions or through voluntary self-restraint, to ensure that right is not abused. I wonder whether Viking/Penguin would have claimed a similar right of freedom of expression to publish books which were anti-Semitic or inflamed racial hatred. And would Harold Pinter and his literary colleagues have lobbied 10 Downing Street in support of an author whose life was being threatened for writing a novel in which Hitler was a hero rather than a villain? Almost certainly not. . . .

the Rushdie row has fuelled the fires of anti-Muslim sentiment in this country, and elsewhere in the West. Such feelings are never far below the surface. Popular newspapers trot out stereotypes of Muslims as people who are fanatical in speech and intolerant in thought. Islam is presented as a primitive, narrow-minded religion still anchored in the Middle Ages, which places more emphasis on the punishment than forgiveness of sinners...

I have long suspected that the West's arrogant disdain of Islam is based in part on the realisation that the growth and increased assertiveness of the Islamic faith (of which fundamentalism is undoubtedly a part) is taking place at a time when Christianity is in decline. But that is another story . . . perhaps one which Rushdie might care to take his pen to next.

Source: ©The Independent, 18th February 1989 - 'Freedom of the Press Also Means Responsibility'.

# Blasphemy: A Mere Joke!

Dear Sir,

May I, as a Christian, ask the courtesy of your columns to make six points about *The Satanic Verses* affair?

consecrated spot on earth is treated no better. Disguised as the "Tent of Black Stone called The Curtain," it has twelve prostitutes with the names of the twelve wives of Mahound to add "the tempting spices of profanity." These "tempting spices" were apparently necessary to increase the number of pilgrims.

Then what else remains of the basic core of Islamic faith? The Prophet is the Devil, the law-givers are sexual perverts, and the Ka'aba and the Haj examples of depravity and greed. The Koran is of course only a collection of Satanic verses. Are these not sufficient to, in the words of our law, "outrage the religious feelings of a section of people"? Soli Sorabjee seems to think that it is just a matter of "adverse criticism of religions or derogatory references to its (sic) founder." This shows an inability to see the difference between reasoned discourse and the search for the sensational

Most liberals and socialists believe that the freedom of artistic expression can have certain reasonable restrictions according to social and historical circumstances. Even where religious faith is vibrant and at the center of identity, it may certainly be opposed by reason and precept but not by means that outrage the faithful into trauma and pain. The pain of scurrilous intrusion into the religions of the sacred is not felt by the so-called fundamentalists only, but it is the common experience of the whole, besieged minority. While there can be rational opposition to their faith, there should be no outraging of it by obscenity and slander.

We, the undersigned, are all not Muslims. We are, therefore, obviously not subscribers to the Islamic faith. We believe that any critique of that faith has to be restrained, reasoned and full of the spirit of respecting diverse cultures and faiths. India's unity and harmony demands it. It is for such harmony and unity that we demand that the ban on this book be not lifted.

J.P. Dixit Nissim Ezekiel Jean Kalgutkar Vrinda Nabar

Vaskar Nandy Vasanthi Raman Ashim Roy

Source: Indian Express, 17th October 1988 - 'You Knew That You Were Courting Trouble'.

1. I sympathise with Muslims in their anger at what is perceived as blasphemy against God and his messenger.

2. Blasphemy has become a meaningless concept in contemporary British society because it is not seriously believed that God exists. The supreme reality on which we rely for welfare is the nation state. To betray the interests of the nation is therefore the supreme crime, but blasphemy is a joke.

3. The blasphemy laws were not designed, as you have suggested "to protect the Christian religion". They were an acknowledgement of the fact that since God is the author and sustainer of our being, to blaspheme him is to inject poison into public life, a poison with more deadly long-term effects than

anything offered by the drug merchants.

4. Christians in this country have become accustomed to hearing their faith blasphemed. They are not permitted to respond as the Ayatollah has done, because the centre of their faith is at the point where the Lord himself accepted death on a charge of blasphemy. Whether the silence of contemporary British Christians in the face of blasphemy is due to an understanding of their faith, or to indifference, only God can judge.

5. Freedom to do and say what one likes is not a human right. We prohibit the sale of harmful drugs to those who want to use them, and we punish harmful speech when it injures a particular individual. We do not punish speech when it poisons the whole of public life; we watch entrepreneurs making profit out of it. We do not and ought not to authorise governments to censor speech, but we (and here the churches have a heavy responsibility) can bear witness to the fact that poison is poison.

6. The present controversy could lead to enmity against the Muslims in Britain. That would be tragic. It could, on the other hand, provide an opportunity for Christians to consider how senously they believe what they profess.

Yours faithfully, Bishop Lesslie Newbigin Birmingham

Source: ©The Independent, 21st February 1989 - "The Satanic Verses": Blasphemy v Freedom of Speech".

# Rushdie's Insensitivity

## by Christopher S. Taylor

As a professional writer, Salman Rushdie knows the importance and power of words. He knows both the good and the evil that words can arouse in the hearts and souls of men. His special circumstance, which makes him a part of two very different worlds, entail a special obligation to know and weigh the impact of his words in both of those worlds. The great potential of Rushdie is that because he stands at the inter-section of two worlds, one modern and secular and the other traditional and erligious, he has much to offer both worlds in terms of mutual understanding or at least an acceptance of each other.

The trouble with his latest work arises from two chapters involving a series of dream sequences that have deeply offended the Muslim world. That the chapters in question refer to the Prophet Muhammad cannot seriously be disputed by anyone familiar with the Islamic religious tradition. Rushdie's recent protests to the contrary are as disingenuous as they are self-serv-

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The problem is less that Rushdie has expressed his own doubt about faith it is the technique he has employed to articulate that doubt. This essentially involves an insulting depiction of Muhammad, which can hardly be anything but deeply offensive to a true believer, even the most tolerant, educated or Westernized among them. Rushdie cannot claim ignorance of the world he has so deeply offended. The fact that Rushdie has chosen to use the technique that he did raises serious issues of his responsibility and sensitivity as a writer. To communicate one's own self is one thing but to do so by deliberately debasing and demeaning what others still cherish as sacred is to cross an altogether different line.

What has enraged Muslims is the way Rushdie has chosen to articulate his doubt by insensitively degrading and devaluing what millions of believing Muslims continue to perceive as sacrosanct. Most of Rushdie's Western readers will not understand what he has done, or appreciate why it is so offensive to Muslims. But the life of the prophet is so familiar and sacred to devout Muslims that Rushdie's treatment of it cannot help offending.

In light of this situation, is it not fair to ask how responsibly Rushdie has exercised the treasured right of free expression guaranteed him in the world he has adopted his own? In questioning his own faith, was it truly necessary for him to depict the prophet of Islam as a lying licentious misogynist and fraud? In searching of our own truths, how much must be destructively trampled on and degrade the faith of other? Why at a time when the mutual understanding between the Islamic tradition that he was born into, and the western secular tradition he has adopted, isso clearly lacking, was it necessary to excite this type of anger?

What exactly is to be gained from the further ignorant ridicule of the Muslim world, on the part of the Western audience that does not understand Islam, or the profound humiliation and resentment of the audience that believes very sincerely and deeply in Islam? When the discourse between our two traditions is already so strained, garbled, do we really need this provocative and inflammatory approach? Is the light it shed worth the pain

and now blood, that it has cost? . . .

The anger in the Islamic world provoked by Rushdie's book arises from a profound sense of pain caused by calculated and senseless ridicule. The hurt caused by this work may be a powerful force in making it a best seller but they are not particularly useful in helping us to better understand either ourselves or the common humanity we need to recognize in each other, especially in the frightening complexity of the contemporary age. In our world, Salman Rushdie has a right to do what he has done.

But we, as part of a large collective humanity, also have rights. We have a right to expect more sensitivity from our writers. We have a right to expect our writers to know the power of the written word, and to exercise their right to use the written word in a responsible manner. We have a right to expect more from our writers. We have a right to expect them to use their talent to help us understand ourselves and each other. Finally, we have a right to feel disappointed when they let us down.

Source: The Christian Science Monitor, 3rd March 1989 - 'Rushdie's Insensitivity'.

# Rushdie and the Freedom of Speech

From Lord Shawcross, QC

Sir. The Government hardly needed the support of the members of the Society of Authors (some more known than others) who signed the letter about *The Satanic Verses* (February 28). The Prime Minister has, as one would expect, made it abundantly clear that the Ayatollah Khomeini's writ, itself a violation of the rule of law and the comity of nations, will not run in this country.

The writers of the letter might however have been better advised to emphasize that the privilege of freedom of speech which we enjoy in this country depends, as do all privileges, upon

responsibility in its exercise.

As to that, I would wish to record my complete agreement with the letter you published from Mr Roald Dahl on the same day. The irresponsibility of Mr Rushdie in publishing a sensational novel which he knew full well would cause immense offence to millions of Muslims all over the world does indeed, as Mr Dahl says, put some strain . . . on our right to say what we like.

This is already demonstrated by the many voices which urge that our law of blasphemy should be extended to protect all theistic religions or at least those satisfying the criteria suggested by the

Archbishop of York in his letter (March 1).

Muslims form a very large section of our fellow human beings and I have great respect for their religion. There is much in the teaching of Muhammad which commends itself to all of us and most Muslims follow their religion with an explicit devotion far exceeding that which I fear many of us show towards our own established religion here.

The Rushdie book has done incalculable harm to the interests of all people, not with any intention of contribution to scholarship (as Mr Yaqub Zaki's important article (February 28) shows) but in order to sensationalise a novel in the hope of securing its better sale. It is a deplorable abuse of the freedom which he shares with the rest of us, but which we must nonetheless defend.

Hartley Shawcross, QC House of Lords.

March 1.

Source: The Times, 3rd March 1989 - 'Rushdie and the Freedom of Speech'.

# Sheer Effrontery: Rushdie's Book Is An Insult

## by Jimmy Carter

In preparation for the Middle East negotiations that led up to Camp David and the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty, I tried to learn as much as possible about the Muslim faith...

"The Satanic Verses" goes much further in vilifying the Prophet Mohammad and defaming the Holy Koran. The author, a well-versed analyst of Muslim beliefs, must have anticipated a horrified

reaction throughout the Islamic world. . . .

While Rushdie's First Amendment freedoms are important, we have tended to promote him and his book with little acknowledgement that it is a direct insult to those millions of Muslims whose sacred beliefs have been violated and are suffering in restrained silence the added embarrassment of the Ayatollah's irresponsibility.

This is the kind of intercultural wound that is difficult to heal. Western leaders should make it clear that in protecting Rushdie's life and civil rights, there is no endorsement of an insult to the sacred beliefs of our Muslim friends. . . .

Source: Are You Being Kept in the Dark: The Satanic Verses - Rushdie's Dilemma, Jamaica NY, Islamic Circle of North America, 1989, p. 6. (To be referred to as ICNA booklet.)

## Who is Fanatic?

### by Keith Vaz

The adjustment made by immigrant communities to their so-called "hosts" is greater than the ability of the host community to accommodate them. The right to belong is more important than the right to be different. This assertion of difference, this protection of culture, has manifested itself indelibly on the British. The monuments to the new communities may not all be as grand

as the Central Mosque in Birmingham or the Sanatan Mandir in Leicester or the great Gudwaras in Southall but they exist.

British history has until now known only two great religious powerhouses, Canterbury and Rome. The "new religions" are at once an object of interest and a threat. First, many are in fact old religions whose histories rival Christianity. Second, the Christian religion has less and less meaning in the lives of ordinary people – because of the policies of this Government. Third, there is no understanding of the role that the new religions play in the lives of the new communities.

The great error of the supporters of Salman Rushdie has been their total failure to grasp the role of Islam in the lives of Muslims. The words that have provoked the greatest reaction at rallies and demonstrations have not been – as the media and Fay Weldon would have us believe – "Kill, kill, kill!" but the much more emphatic "Nara-et-Akbar?" ("Who is great?") [sic] producing the response "Allah-o-Akbar" ("God is great").

Devotion is described as fanaticism. Those who have opposed Rushdie's decision to publish a book steeped in intolerance and religious abuse are branded as supporters of the fanatics. All those who pray and believe are by their nature fanatics. How strong is your belief in your religion if you don't believe in its fundamental values? Faith is something to be respected and revered: not to

be used as an opportunity to humiliate.

We owe a debt of gratitude to Rushdie for the thoughts he has provoked. A remarkable coalition of all classes and shades of opinion will not kowtow to book and effigy burners so long as the book is *The Satanic Verses* and the effigies are of Rushdie. Yet Scottish councillors burning poll tax notices and Hampshire residents burning an effigy of the Secretary of State for the Environment are not ticked off. No questions are asked here about fanatics and fundamentalists.

Last week 12,000 worthies rallied to defend Rushdie. They were lecturing the new religions and new communities by reasserting fundamental principles. To be British is to accept the rule of law; this is a fundamental principle. Yet in exchange for British citizenship, the new Britons are to be stripped of not just culture but also religion. They must be sanitised from a thousand years of their history. Women above all must be liberated.

The liberation of Asian and especially Muslim women has

become a great cause for the Rushdie defenders. The hypocrisy is extraordinary and the arrogance is breathtaking. I am sure that I went to a synagogue recently in which women were placed in a different part of the room from men. I saw no demonstrations outside urging the Jewish religion to liberate its women.

Fay Weldon is the new, self-appointed liberator. Her pamphlet, Sacred Cows, declares that the Koran has enslaved Muslim women. Living, as we all do, in a society that is supposed to be enlightened but which tolerates and encourages sexism and the suppression of women in abundance, it is the ultimate cheek to lecture Muslim women about liberation and Muslim men about sexism.

An international conference held in Kuwait in 1980 and sponsored by the International Commission of Jurists recognised that the equal rights of women is a vital teaching of the Koran. There was no question of second-class status. During the recent Pakistani elections, observers noted the huge personal vote generated to elect the first woman leader of an Islamic state. It is impossible to under-estimate the impact of this event on Muslim women.

To mock and goad the new religions is to rob them of their roots and their sensitivities. They must be left to develop in their own way: aware that they are not in their countries of origin; that they are minority religions; that they are in another place which has less tolerance and understanding than they were entitled to expect.

Source: @The Independent, 29th July 1989 - 'Lecturing is the Ultimate Cheek'.

# No Authorship Without Responsibility!

culture for the excesses of Islam, the Rushdie affair has also brought out the worst in Western liberalism. In the name of tolerance we cry for a total autonomy of the arts. The slogan seems to be: "If we will we may." Does not authorship have responsibility to social well-being? Is there to be nothing like a "highway code" of community above commodity by which we

ficely take account of "the common good" and – so doing – both curtail our liberties and ensure our freedoms?

The Right Rev Kenneth Cragg

Source: OThe Independent, 8th August 1989 - 'Western Views of Islam'.

# Lay Off the Sacred

## by Charles Taylor

... We tend to think that freedom of speech is indivisible, that either it applies to everything or it doesn't exist at all. . . .

But why give such a special status to religion? . . . Even looking at it from a secular humanist point of view, the fact that someone's religion is the locus of his/her stand on the deepest and most fundamental issues – death, evil, the meaning of life – seems to justify giving it exceptional protection. This all still seems obvious outside of the West, but no longer so clear here. . . .

Let unbelievers explore their views; only let them lay off the symbols, stories, figures, books which are sacred to religious traditions. Couldn't Kanzantzakis have made his point without bringing in Christ's sex life? Couldn't Rushdie without the insulting story about Mahound? . . .

. To live in this difficult world, the western liberal mind will have to learn to reach out more.

Source: Public Culture, 2/1, Fall 1989 - 'The Rushdie Controversy'.

## What Freedom?

proposition that the Publishers Association represents the interests of various groups which "must and do have a legitimate interest in freedom of expression". The PA in fact only represents

#### Sacrilege versus Civility

publishers, but on the question of freedom of expression, one has to ask "Whose freedom?" and, especially, "What freedom?"

Is it the freedom to be malicious and scurrilous about women blacks, Jews, homosexuals and, for example, Jeffrey Archer, Robert Maxwell and Sonia Sutcliffe? And if we recognise that we are not free in this sense due to various legal pitfalls and the power of self-censorship, should we therefore be free to traduce what are well known to be essential articles of religious faith? These last are a soft target: we can defy religious zealots to do their worst with a self-righteousness that simply cannot be deployed on groups protected by the liberal consensus if not by law, or on libelled individuals.

The Muslims have fought back and are absolutely right to do so. Their beliefs are the very fabric of their community and identity, and if we, of other religions or none, are not merely unable to understand this but self-righteously condemn them for their desire to see *The Satanic Verses* extirpated, we are betraying the ethos of our society, which is still one of tolerance and courtesy: in this case the burden of toleration is on us, the host society. We may never be able to grasp exactly why they find the book intolerable, but can we not now give them the benefit of any doubt?

This wretched book has caused death and mayhem, and yet there have been triumphalist demands for its publication in paperback (as if the cased edition had not sold enough copies), just so that the cup of "freedom" can be drunk to its lees. With superb unconcern, the knife is given another twist inside the wound.

Publishers should stand together in the face of threats, blatant or insidious, to their basic freedom to publish. But this togetherness loses much of its force when the cause is dubious. To a publisher in a country where there is no political freedom, the freedom to blaspheme must seem a very odd cause in which to go to the battlements.

Christopher Hurst London WC2.

Source: The Bookseller, 17th November 1989 - 'The Satanic Verses'.

# Living Without The Sacred

## by Lesslie Newbigin

... A society which has finally lost the sense of the sacred, in which there is nothing worthy of reverence, must eventually dissolve into nihilism. In such a society no meaning can finally be affirmed. Art and literature, as well as behaviour must eventually be meaningless. Because freedom degenerates into idiocy if it loses contact with reality, a free society cannot be sustained forever without the commitment of its people, or at least some of them, to something which is sacred, for which life itself may be surrendered. I think British people must be grateful to Muslims for challenging a false idea of freedom. . . . Both Christians and Muslims can, however, join in unmasking a false concept of freedom, in warning against its consequences, in bearing witness to the reality of the sacred, and in protesting when that which is sacred is treated with contempt or ridicule. Among ourselves, both in the internal discussions of matters of faith within the Christian and Muslim communities, and in dialogue between them, we shall always need to use our critical faculties in serious discussion with one another. But it will be done with reverence for the sacred, even when we differ in our understandings. For, as has been well said, it is no more possible to understand the reality by which we are surrounded and sustained without reverence, than it is to penetrate the secrets of the galaxies without a telescope.

Source: Discernment (London), 4/2, 1990, p. 17 - 'Blasphemy and the Free Society'.

# Without Any Faith!

### by Bhikhu Parekh

Salman Rushdie's suggestively entitled "In Good Faith" . . . is a polemical not a reflective statement, conceived in a combative

# An Open Letter

not contemplative mood. It defends *The Satanic Verses* against criticisms rather than analysis, and reflects on their content cultural context and provenance.

Rushdie does not inquire why his book has provoked such strong reaction and what deep nerves it has disturbed; he is convinced that it is all a result of political manipulation, massive misunderstanding or egregious ignorance. He does not ask why his critics include not just mullahs and their gullible flock, but also decent and fair-minded Muslims – such intelligent Muslim writers as Ali Mazrui and Edward Said, many a non-Muslim and even a few a-religious sceptics, atheists and Marxists.

The Muslims ask why he mixed up religion and sex, which Islam so radically separates, and why he thought it fit to discuss fantasised Islam with a generous helping of the four-letter word and other "abusive" epithets. They want to know what gives the artist the right to plunder and reduce the deepest experiences and memories of a community to a mere raw material to be used as he pleases, and why the community does not enjoy the equal right to fight back in defence of what gives meaning to its existence.

However mistaken these questions might be, they deserve answers. To conceptualise them in terms of a clash between an and religion, or between imagination and faith, is wholly to misunderstand them. Rushdie's subsequent Herbert Read Memorial Lecture sets up false antinomies, misdefines transcendence and sacredness, and skirts important issues. In spite of these and other limitations, Rushdie's "In good faith" is a most important and welcome contribution. That he should have made it at all is an earnest of his anguish at the tragic events of the past year.

Although he is not wholly convincing, he takes great pains to explain the intricate structure of the book. In deeply moving words he expresses his pain at the racist abuse hurled at Muslims, pleads for a "way forward" through the "mutual recognition of mutual pain", affirms his "good-faith", "regrets" the unintended offence, and grieves at his separation from "my community, from India".

Source: ©The Independent on Sunday, 11th February 1990 - 'Towards Mutual Understanding'.

Dear Mr Rushdie,

I am extremely glad that the first Muslim responses, published in last Monday's *Independent*, to your article "In good faith" have been so generous. My own reaction, I am sorry to say, is less generous. After a year in which to reflect upon it, is that all that you could manage to say?

The "Rushdie affair" has done untold damage. It has intensified the alienation of Muslims here and in other Western countries from the society around them, in reaction to the uncomprehending liberal chorus of support for you. Racial hostility towards them, where overt, has been inflamed, and, where latent, has been aroused. All hope of any relaxation of Iranian rigour has been destroyed, and, with it, any relief for the wretched hostages, whose far more severe imprisonment than yours you do not mention.

A great part of the blame of course rests with the Ayatollah Khomeini, not least for obscuring the fact that there would still have been a Rushdie affair without his intervention. His fatwa, which I assume Sunni Muslims have no duty to respect, was an abominable act, supplying to all those prejudiced against Islam a legitimate ground of accusation. Yet more shocking even than Khomeini's call for your assassination was his subsequent statement that, even if you were to repent and become a model Muslim, you would still burn in hell, implying of course, that there are sins which Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful, does not forgive even the repentant. If this accorded with sound Muslim theology, the religion would not deserve respect. We should not be perturbed, however, that so few Muslim authorities have repudiated the statement. That is sufficiently explained by the fate of the imam in Belgium, whom you do not think worth mentioning and everyone else seems to have forgotten, who spoke out against Khomeini and actually was assassinated.

What worried me most in what you say is that you do not seem to have understood what the affair has done to you; here we can only say, what have you done to yourself. Before *The Satanic Verses* was published, you were a hero among members of the ethnic minorities, far beyond the circle of those who had read

your books, for your forceful television broadcast denouncing British racism. (You did me the honour to quote with approval something I had written, which constitutes my only qualification for now writing to you.) It was your status as a hero that made your book appear so great a betrayal. Much as you might want to, you can never again play that role: you can never again credibly assume the stance of denouncer of white prejudice. For now you are one of us. You have become an honorary white: merely an honorary white intellectual, it is true, but an honorary white all the same.

Some of your defenders so far forgot themselves as to declare that, if Muslims cannot abide free speech they should go back where they came from. You round on them, affecting to suppose them to be telling you to go back where you came from. They were not addressing you, Mr Rushdie: they were defending you. You will remain there as long as you cannot bring yourself to repudiate what you did, and, as a first, least step, to cease insisting on your right to have as many readers for your book as possible.

You protest the falsity of the accusation, "He must have known". No one could have foreseen all that would happen; but I incline to think that, if you really did not grasp the offence you would give to believing Muslims, you were not qualified to write upon the subject you chose. In any case, no one escapes responsibility for the consequences of a bad action by having failed to foresee them; moreover, you know now, yet you still insist on your right to wider publication.

Rhetoric about free speech always obscures the evident distinction between whether there should be legal restraints on what is said, and whether there are moral constraints on what ought to be said. It is, in my view, a disgusting thing to defile what other men regard as holy; and no literary intention, however lofty, can excuse it. You have imbibed the assumption of Western intellectuals that religious believers may properly be affronted, indeed deserve to be affronted. Those in the West who have no religious belief are oblivious to the depth of pain caused to those who have by what they perceive as blasphemy: lacking so much as the concept of some things being holy, they lack the will to grasp the magnitude of the affront, although they could begin to imagine it if there is anything they hold dear or in respect. It is unimaginative to say, "They don't have to read or watch it if they don't

want to": in some cases (like yours), they can't escape hearing about it; in others, it is encountered quite unexpectedly.

The ground for the law against blasphemy is different, now this is no longer a Christian country as such; and the case for its extension is sound. If there had been such a law, the Rushdie affair would not have occurred; we can hardly afford another such. We rightly do not extend the principle of free speech to cover incitement to racial hatred or contempt; no sacred principle would be breached by withdrawing its protection from writings grossly offensive to believers in non-Christian religions, as opposed to seriously reasoned argument. I have no doubt that, under such a law, you could have found a way of expressing yourself that did not breach it. Free speech enthusiasts warn us that, if we censor pornography or blasphemy, we shall be opening the doors to political censorship; that this warning is a sham is shown by their lack of concern about the political censorship already in existence (the suppression some years ago of the news of the man who incinerated himself outside 10 Downing Street, for instance).

Certainly it is said that anyone should be able publicly to threaten murder with impunity; that is the price our law pays for not prohibiting what a whole community views as an intolerable insult. It is to the credit of this country that some have shown an understanding of the nature of the affront you gave, instead of reacting as Americans did to an insult to the First Amendment of their holy book; your attributing this solely to a desire for votes shows that you have not yet understood what you did. Until you do, and probably even if you do, its reverberations will continue.

Michael Dummett New College, Oxford

Source: @The Independent on Sunday, 11th February 1990 - 'An Open Letter'

## Who Killed the Writer?

I was deeply saddened to read Salman Rushdie's attack on me in the course of a magnificent defence of the liberal position. But

now I feel at the very least I have put on record why my play Who Killed the Writer? has not appeared in public.

I wrote the play very quickly in the weeks following the fatwa, believing writers should immediately do what they could to express support, and, more importantly, draw the lessons from the event.

Through a confrontation between the assassin and a political journalist, I wanted to show that the West, particularly the British and American secret services, deliberately brought down the democratically elected Iranian government headed by Mossadeq in 1953, and installed the appalling regime of the Shah, which used its secret police to terrorise all opposition.

I did not send the play to Mr Rushdie "in case he needed something to read". As I explained in the covering letter, "I want to give you the opportunity to see this play before the title becomes known in the hope that it will reassure you that, while I have used your appalling predicament, I have not exploited it.... I have only one hope for the play and that is by widening the debate about Muslim (or any other) fundamentalism, I may contribute to a general lessening of tensions in the world. I want to show that though your condemnation by the Ayatollah was wicked and unacceptable in any kind of world order we can tolerate, it did not arrive out of the blue but that the Western powers have helped to create the monster which now threatens to devour us."

Mr Rushdie responded by leaving a message on my answerphone saying that he was appalled that I would think the play which postulated his death could in any way be acceptable to him, that he would resist its being performed.

As Mr Rushdie is nowhere portrayed or even named in the play it was easy to change the title to Who Killed the Writer? (though it would be disingenuous to pretend the play was not predicated on his position). But I was shocked to be in receipt of a letter from Mr Rushdie's agent saying that if we intended production we should send him a formal note so that he could "establish Salman's legal rights".

The irony of Mr Rushdie wishing to suppress a play because it offended him was so obvious that it became clear to me he could not be thinking well. I decided not to go ahead with production No note was sent. It is hard now not to feel that my act of self-censorship was misguided.

Source: ©The Independent on Sunday, 11th February 1990 – 'Who Killed the Writer?' Since The Independent on Sunday did not have the forwarding address of Mr Brian Clark we could not seek his permission to reproduce the above letter, though the Independent stated that they had no objection to our using it. If we are able to trace Mr Clark's address, the necessary steps would be taken for the second edition.

# Compromise That Rushdie Will Have to Make

Some kind of reciprocal understanding is going to be the only way out of Salman Rushdie's distressing situation, but he does himself little service in claiming a sort of infallibility in all points of detail, nit-picking his way through the one-sidedly sympathetic media.

As one who admires his work with some reservations, but believes it deserving of publication in all available forms, I am a little dismayed by his postures of self-righteousness and self-importance: in particular in claiming that the novel in general — and presumably his own in particular — is now the best substitute for formal religion.

Any artist would do well to take a second look at his understanding of humanity if he is blind to the fact that there are areas of sensibility and attack which initiates will still, even in the modern world, defend to the death. In Britain treason against the state is still a capital offence though some right-minded individuals who have suffered unnecessarily and painfully during the past decade, might be forgiven for doubting the unmitigated wisdom of that law. Punishment by death is always barbaric, but its demand should not surprise the perceptive mind who is willing to understand the variety of human responses.

Salman Rushdie's attitude appears to be one of unrelenting astonishment, in which case his naivete in these matters should have encouraged him to look deeper and harder before committing his pen to paper. Or if he did guess the likely response that his book would provoke, his present situation should not surprise him.

From him, a statement that he can see and understand at least a little of the point of view of the other side and less self-justification at all cost might begin to help. Most of all, we should bear in mind that he has written not some valuable though suppressed treatise on human rights, but a derivative novel of debated merit, whose publication is likely to change nothing in terms of the human condition or its amelioration.

Ian Flintoff, 22 Chaldon Road, London SW6.

Source: ©The Guardian, 19th February 1990 – 'Compromise That Rushdie Will Have to Make'.

## A Contract With the Devil

#### by Atam Vetta

... Mr Rushdie and his friends allege that the critics of his book are radical Muslims. Some of them are but others are not. I am one of the latter. I am not even a Muslim and if I am forced to subscribe to a religion it will have to be the Hindu religion and an agnostic Hindu at that. I believe it is the duty of those non-Muslims who feel equally offended by *The Satanic Verses* to speak up.

The inability of the Western literary world to comprehend the anger and frustration that most Muslims and Hindus feel at the publication of the book is exemplified by the issue of the World Statement. The signatories deceive themselves by pretending that they are 'also involved in the publication' of the book. This they assert is because they 'defend the right to freedom of opinion and expression'. The implication is that those, perhaps, like myself, who believe that the book should be withdrawn do not or would not defend these rights. This implication I reject with utmost contempt as would the signatories if only they would allow their common sense to take precedence over irrational anger. Freedom of expression is not a licence and must be exercised in conjunction

with other freedoms. It is this failure i.e. taking account of other freedoms, of the Western literary world which, in the final analysis, resulted in the issuing of the Fatwa. Had the book been withdrawn there would have been no need of the Fatwa. It is doubtful if most of the signatories of the World Statement have either read or understood the book.

#### Origins of the Book

It is generally accepted that Mr Rushdie may have got the idea of the book from his paper Muhammad, Islam and the Rise of Caliphs which he wrote while at King's College, Cambridge for Part II of his history Tripos ('The Sunday Times', 19 February). He is reputed to have been paid \$850,000 in advance royalties by his publishers. Viking Penguin then asked their editorial consultant Mr Khushwant Singh for his expert opinion on the manuscript. He advised that the book was 'lethal' ('The Times', 20 February 1989) and rejected it. He is reported by the 'Times' to have said, 'I must say "I told you so". I read the manuscript carefully and I was positive that it would cause a lot of trouble. There are several derogatory references to the Prophet and to the Koran and Muhammad is made out to be a small-time imposter".'

Mr Singh's statement indicates that, at least, the publishers Viking Penguin were aware of the tragic possibilities. It needs to be stated firmly that any reasonable person from the Indian subcontinent would have realised that the publication of the book may create serious problems in India and Pakistan. Therefore, it is not correct to say that 'Rushdie could not have calculated the effect of what he wrote, because the effect came almost as an after thought' ('The New Statesman', 21 March 1989).

The criticism against The Satanic Verses is that it is pornographic and it is blasphemous. Besides it insults the different ethnic groups and British women.

#### Choice of the Name 'Mahound'

Mahound was the name given to the Prophet Muhammad by Christian crusaders. In the war between the two religions they wanted to denigrate and disparage Muslims. Their chosen name Mahound, means a lustful and profligate false prophet and an idolater. It is a word of abuse. Mr Rushdie acknowledges that 'long ago. (it) was indeed used as derogatory term'. He, however defends his choice of the name by saying that his novel tries in all sorts of ways to reoccupy negative images, to reposses pejorative language, and on page 93 explains 'To turn insults into strengths, whigs, tories, Blacks all chose to wear with pride the names they were given in scorn; likewise, our mountain climbing, prophet-motivated solitary is to be . . . Mahound'. Mr Rushdie omits to quote himself fully. Actually, he continues, '(to be) the medieval baby frightener, the Devil's synonym: (Mahound) Does he really expect us to accept the 'the demon-tag (Mahound) the frangis' wished to hang around our necks? We have rejected it for nearly a thousand years. His description of the Prophet is far from flattering. There is no attempt on page 93 to pretend that he is talking about any one other than the Prophet Muhammad. Indeed, it is evident from his article in the 'Observer' that he is talking about Muhammad. Mr Rushdie's Mahound is, in fact, the Prophet Muhammad.

Mahound is asked 'What kind of idea are you? Man or mouse?' (p.95).

In Britain 'bastard' is not now regarded to be such an abusive word but on the Indian subcontinent it is a degrading form of abuse and its use may result in a rather serious affray resulting in bodily injuries. Mr Rushdie describes Ibrahim as a bastard.

Muhammad had, in Christian terminology, three 'disciples'. Their names were Khalid who was a water carrier (beheshti), Salman who was of Persian origin and Bilal who was a freed black slave. The three companions of the Prophet are treated with respect by Muslims. Mr Rushdie describes Khalid as the 'despised water carrier' (p.95). He describes Salman as a 'bum from Persia and Bilal as 'an enormous black monster'. The three are described as 'this trinity of scum'; 'idlers' and 'a bunch of riff raff'. They are also described as 'goons' and 'those f...... clowns' (p.101). I wonder what would be the reaction of most British people if the disciples of Jesus were described in this manner. He describes Muhammad and the three companions as "Mahound with his raggle-taggle gang" (p.102).

Concerning Muhammad's ideas and philosophy, he says 'lf Mahound's ideas were worth anything, do you think they would only be popular with trash like you (i.e. the three companions)'

Further '.... unpopular Prophet and his wretched followers' (p.113).

Mr Rushdic makes archangel Gibreel say 'Mahound comes to me for revelation, asking me to choose between monotheist and henotheist alternatives, and I am just some idiot actor having a bhaenchod (sister f....) nightmare, what the f... do I know, yaar (friend), what to tell you, help. Help' (p.109).

He continually describes Muhammad as 'Prophet Messenger Businessman' (p.118). He states that Mahound 'had no time for scruples . . . no qualms about end and means' (p.363).

Concerning the early followers of Islam, he says, 'The faithful lived by lawlessness, but in those years Mahound – or should one say the Archangel Gibreel? – should one say Al-lah?' (p. 363) – became obsessed by law. . . .

#### Muhammad's Personal Life

Concerning Muhammad's personal life: '... but after his wife's death Mahound was no angel, you understand my meaning. But in Yathrib he almost met his match. Those women up there: they turned his beard half-white within a year' (p.366).

"The point about our Prophet, my dear Baal, is that he did not like his women to answer back, he went for mothers and daughters, think of his first wife and then Ayesha: too old and too young (p.366). Who would not find this abusive?

'No wonder the two of you did not hit off: she wouldn't be your mother or your child' (p.369).

He recounted a quarrel between Mahound and Ayesha. 'That girl could not stomach it that her husband wanted so many other women. He talked about necessity, political alliances and so on, but she was not fooled. Who can blame her? Finally he went into -what else? - one of his trances, and out he came with a message from the archangel. Gibreel had recited verses giving him full divine support. God's own permission to f... as many women as he liked. So there: what could poor Ayesha say against verses of God? You know what she did say? This: "Your God certainly jumps to it when you need him to fix things up for you" (p. 386).

The sexual aspect of Submission (the religion of Mahound) is "unhealthy", pronounced Salman.

Safwan brought Ayesha back to Yathrib safe and sound; at

which point tongues began to wag, not least in the harem...
The two young people had been alone in the desert for many hours, and it was hinted at ... might not she therefore have been attracted to someone closer to her own age? "Quite a scandal"... (Mahound) saw his pet, the archangel, and then informed one and all that Gibreel had exonerated Ayesha... the lady didn't complain about the convenience of the verses'.

'Mahound said "Writers and whores. I see no difference"

(p.392).

'Hind won't be happy till she has ripped out your (Mahound's) tongue, to say nothing of my balls, excuse me' (p.125).

#### Pornography

The book is pornographic in its excessive use of the four letter words and descriptions which stimulate sexual excitement. Indeed, one of the demands made by some critics is that if it is to be made available in a public library then it should be catalogued under pornography. Mr Rushdie is aware of this. He says 'The zealots also attack me by false analogy, comparing my book to pornography and demanding a ban on both. Many Islamic spokesmen have compared my work to antisemitism. But intellectual dissent is neither pornographic nor racist' ('Observer', 22 January 1989).

Regrettably, the judgement whether a book is a work of art, an intellectual dissent or pornography is intensely personal. No criteria exist which enable us to make the decision objectively. The days when the occurrence of the four letter word in a book was sufficient for it to be declared pornographic are long past. I can do no better than to itemise the phrases and sentences which have led many to dub it as pornographic.

(Dr Atam Vetta provides quotes from 47 pages where the four-letter word is used generally as well as in relation to 'white women', 'this country', 'this nation', 'communists' etc.)

The Satanic Verses uses the word penis and its different names some of which were not known to the authors of the Kama Sulva or The Perfumed Garden. (14 page references are cited.)...

#### Racism

Chinese - 'the little yellow buggers . . . ' (p.196). 'Goddamn Chinese' (p.197).

African Britons – Seeing black men and women in a church the reaction of one of his characters is interesting. He says 'Hubshees'

Troublemakers and savages he called them. 'I feel sorry for you' he pronounced. "Every morning you have to look yourself in the mirror, and see, staring back, the darkness, the stain, the proof that you are the lowest of the low' (p.255).

Sikhs - 'Sikh Kebab' (p.440).

The English - 'Those bastards (Londoners) down there won't know what hit them' (p.1).

Mrs Chamchawala advises her son 'Don't go dirty like those English', she warned him. 'They wipe their bee tee em with paper only. Also they get into each other's dirty bathwater' (p.39).

The trouble with the English was that they were English: damn cold fish! - Living underwater most of the year, in days the colour

of night' (p.352).

the moral fuzziness of the English was meteorologically induced... when the land is not drier than the sea, then clearly apeople will lose their power to make distinctions...' (p.354).

the poison of this devil island had infected her baby girls'

(p.250).

"Plus also they had come to the demon city (London) in which anything could happen' (p.250).

'Yes a land of phantom imps' (Britain) (p.250).

'... (famous) for his predilections for white women with enormous breasts and plenty of rump' (p.261).

#### And the Queen

tender love to the Monarch. She was the body of Britain, the avatar of the State, and he had chosen her joined with her; she was his beloved, the moon of his delight' (p.169).

### Intellectual Dissent?

Mr Rushdie as quoted above says that intellectual dissent is not pornography. I agree with him. Neither is pornography necessarily intellectual dissent. I am told that Mr Rushdie's contribution to the English novel is not based on the excessive use of four and five letter words in different languages. Pornographic words and

phrases quoted above should not ordinarily evoke comment. The problem arises because they are used in the context of the Prophel Muhammad and his close associates and companions. Many fellow human beings hold him in high regard.

Mr Rushdie fails to understand this simple point and says that 'They have turned Muhammad into a perfect being,' his life into a perfect life, his revelation into the unambiguous, clear event it originally was not. One may not discuss Muhammad as if he were human, with human virtues and weaknesses. One may not discuss Islam as a historical phenomenon, as an ideology born out of its time. These are the taboo against which *The Sutanic Verses* has transgressed . . . ('Observer', 22 January 1989).

He is wrong. One may do all these. He has done none of these. His transgression is that he has surrounded the Prophet and the revelations with pornography. There is no legitimate reason for this. It is odd that neither he nor his Liberal and Literati backers understand this simple fact.

#### Surrealist Satire?

Mr Rushdie says 'Of all the European artistic movements, surrealism is the one I most respond to, the idea that you have to make the world fresh, scratching away at the surface of expectation and habit.

I subscribe to the modernist belief that there is no longer an agreed definition of the universe or even of society. And when the consensus breaks down, you can't write a realistic novel any more.' ('The Independent Magazine,' 10 September, 1988, p.60.) This has led some writers to conclude as did Mr John Calder that 'The novel (The Satanic Verses) is basically a surrealist satire' ('The Guardian', 11 March 1989).

In the Bandung File interview on Channel 4, Mr Rushdie was asked 'The controversy, in a sense, has been on your acting on the historic text of the Qur'an and playing with that. How much was that based on historical fact?' His answer was: 'Almost entirely... The interesting thing about Muhammad is that there is objective information about him other than in the sacred text

... and the relationship between people involved is absolutely fascinating' ('The Guardian', 15 February 1989). He goes on to say, 'So I thought, let us not try and pretend to be writing a

history. Let us take the themes I am interested in and fantasise them and fabulate them and all that . . . 'His fantasy turns into obscenity. Maybe this is surrealism. . . .

## Dev Assur Sanghram (Battle Between Good and Evil)

The ancient Hindus also knew about the battle between 'the light and the dark'. For they invented the concept of *Dev Assur Sanghram* which simply translated means a battle between Good and Evil. This is a continuous battle. The *devas* for Mr Rushdie are all those who support his association of pornography with Muhammad and *Assurs* are those who complain against it. I am probably an *assur* in his eyes.

In his 'Observer' article he says that his book 'is a clash of faiths, in a way. Or more precisely, it is a clash of languages'. On this he is right. It is a clash of faiths. A clash between his faith and mine, between his values and mine. His faith which tramples on the faith of others and mine which respects their faith in the knowledge that there are few absolute truths. His certainty which can only be conveyed by extensive use of pornography and my doubt, where pornography has no place and a sexual act is a totally personal affair. His faith in his own freedom of expression which requires that the freedom of expression of others be curtailed. Specifically, the Labour leadership should respond by disowning (the) initiative' of Brian Sedgemore MP, Max Madden MP, Bernie Grant MP and Councillor Mohammad Ajeeb in asking that the blasphemy law be extended to cover Islam. If you do not agree with Mr Rushdie you are on the side of the Mullahs who are the 'contemporary thought police'. In the struggle between 'light and dark', you have then chosen the dark (quotes from 'Observer', 22 January 1989).

Mr Rushdie's 'Mullahs' are not slow to respond. For example, Dr Shabir Akhtar's concept of a Muslim in the present context is rather interesting. He says that 'Anyone who fails to be offended by Rushdie's book ipso facto ceases to be a Muslim' (The Guardian' 27 February 1989). I do hope that the converse is not true because I have no intention of becoming a Muslim. I totally reject the idea that only a Muslim will feel offended by insults to the Prophet and am confident that Dr Akhtar does not imply that.

#### Mr Rushdie and the Mullahs

Mr Rushdie is clear in his mind that he was writing against the taboos imposed by 'a powerful tribe of clerics'. He is not the first to do so. In Urdu poetry there is a strong and respected tradition of poking fun at clerics. The poets, however, did not indulge in pornography and did not insult the Prophet and people closely associated with him. I am not one of Martin Amis' ('New Statesman', 30 March, 1989) 'career clerics and self-ghettosing community leaders' (perhaps he will tell me who the latter are as I have not met any) but, like him, I am convinced that Mr Rushdie knew what he was doing. I am, however, less certain whether Martin Amis does.

Mr Rushdie is simply trying to stereotype Mullahs. The latter, like any other human beings, also have political and social convictions.

#### Freedom of Speech

It is a pity that Mr Rushdie's character Swatilekha, who announced that battle lines are being drawn in India today is not an Asian Briton.

Otherwise she would have noticed that in Britain a battle line separates those who believe that the freedom of speech is the only sacred thing in life and those who would grant the status of sacredness to other things including religious faiths of fellow human beings and the life itself, whether it belongs to a protesting Indian or Pakistani Muslim or a Briton. It divides those who believe with Mr Rushdie that 'the offence done to our principles (by the Bradford flames) is as great as any offence caused to those who burned my book' from those, like myself, who are offended by the Bradford flames but nonetheless believe that the offence caused by his book is immeasurably greater. The divide between those who have turned the Freedom of Speech into a new goddess and its worship into a most exalted religion and those, like myself, who remain agnostic even in the presence of this new goddess or. like many Muslims who regard their own creed superior to the new creed.

For an immigrant, life is a struggle and being accepted on equal terms in the new homeland appears to be an impossible task.

Businesses, universities, publishers are all controlled by others. It is very tempting, for the sake of being accepted 'to die first' and then 'to be born again'. Most Asian Britons have resisted this temptation, because as Rushdie's Mahound says, 'Writers and prostitutes. I see no difference'.

The world media is controlled by people who are not particularly sympathetic to views people like myself hold. The play Perdition is not acceptable, not because it portrays the weaknesses of humans faced with an impossible situation but because those humans happen to be Zionists.

The Satanic Verses is acceptable because it maligns a religion which Europeans have maligned for centuries. The interesting question is would Viking Penguin have published the book had it been an Indian controlled company with headquarters in Delhi and a branch office in London?

Some purists believe that the freedom of speech of an individual is at stake. They claim the right to be able to read and judge for themselves. I have profound respect for this position, provided it is espoused with consistency. Anyone who has not opposed censorship in other situations eg against the IRA, against the Zionist pressures to ban a play like Perdition, etc. is not a purist. Being a Gandhite, I cannot and do not support the violence perpetrated by the IRA. I am also against the publication of speeches, articles, books etc, which insult any ethnic group. I am not a purist. I believe that an individual's freedom of speech is constrained by other freedoms and also by freedoms of others. It is not a licence to insult.

The Satanic Verses is a pornographic insult to the Prophet Muhammad and people associated with him. It also insults other individuals.

l am totally opposed to the issuing of the Fatwa and we must endeavour to have it withdrawn. We also need to have the book withdrawn because it is a continuing provocation.

Islam has a long tradition of civilised debate about its origins and its culture. No Muslim will shirk from a discussion of these. Profanity, however, is different and The Satanic Verses is profane.

Source: Impact International, 20/4, 23rd February-8th March 1990 - 'A Contract With the Devil'.

# Equal Treatment

While it is a matter of regret that the three High Court judges found it impossible to include insults to Islam in the present laws on blasphemy (Guardian, May 25), it was pleasing to read that despite the judges expressing their inability to refer this case to the Lords, they have left it open to the Lords to hear the case if they choose to do so. This is surely an indication of the embarrassment they have experienced over this issue.

It is time, in my opinion, that Salman Rushdie and his publishers began to appreciate that they cannot run rough-shod over genuine faith under the very convenient claim for freedom of expression. I would not deny that freedom of expression should be an ideal to aim at, but it is clear that we are as yet a long way from reaching it. The fact that laws of blasphemy exist is proof of that.

If such laws are still found necessary then they should cover all established faiths, especially a faith which is numerically the largest faith in the world today.

(Rev) S. Raymond, Virgo Fidelis Convent, London SE19.

Source: OThe Guardian, 30th May 1990 - 'Faith and Freedom'.

# Defamatory Claims in the Name of Artistic Freedom

by George Chryssides

... The debate about the Rushdie affair cannot be separated from what the book itself actually says, and few discussants have actually read it... Indeed I am inclined to believe that the novel is so offensive to Muslims that they are not even prepared to quote the truly offensive material in support of their own case. The angel Gabriel (Gibreel) is portrayed not only as sexually

promiscuous: he drinks alcohol, eats pork and commits adultery. Muhammad not only receives 'satanic' verses, but is at one point found drunk in a gutter in between Our'anic revelations.

Given the degree of respect which Muslims accord both to Gabriel and Muhammad, it is impossible to think of anything which would cause equivalent offence to mainstream Christians, let alone secular materialists. One might speculate as to how Christians would react if Jesus Christ were portrayed as a paedophile or a cannibal, or secular humanists might profitably reflect on how they would react if a novelist used their spouses for artistic subject matter and ficticiously portrayed them as unfaithful, criminally immoral and totally lacking in integrity. . . .

Of course, no such novel could be published in the name of artistic freedom. . . Since the Buddha, Jesus Christ and Muhammad are no longer alive (at least in the conventional sense), it is possible with impunity, as the Rushdie affair has amply demonstrated, to malign a long deceased religious leader and avoid any legal consequences. . . .

Indeed defamatory claims which bear no claim to literal truth can be more damaging than those that do. If a biblical scholar wishes to advance a particularly shocking theory about Jesus Christ (say, that he was a paedophile), he or she would be obliged to produce some kind of evidence in support of the claim, and the contention would fall into the arena of proper academic debate. But if a novelist writes a work of fiction which makes similar allegations, he is under no such obligation to prove the thesis. The 'truth' of a novel does require the same rigour of defence as the scholarly work. Art is art, not necessarily fact. By writing a work of fiction, Rushdie has thus exonerated himself from the obligations and stringencies which would normally be demanded of a serious scholar.

Source: Discernment: Focus on the Salman Rushdie Affair (London), 4/2, 1990, pp 21-2, 23 - 'Fact and Fiction in the Salman Rushdie Affair'.

# Arrogance of Secular Liberalism

### by Peter Mullen

It would be unjust and libellous – because false – if I were to sit down and write that the present Archbishop of Canterbury is a child-molester or that the Pope is a practising homosexual. I could legitimately write a novel about a child-molester or a practising homosexual; but I would err greatly if I attached these descriptions to historical characters whose behaviour did not involve those acts.

Moreover, if I were to claim that Rushdie is a pornographer, whose only interest is in making money out of offending the faithful, I would no doubt be criticised by him and his lawyers-because, presumably. I had said something about him which is not true. Well, Rushdie should afford the same liberal courtesy to Muhammad before he is tempted to put words into the Prophet's mouth that are not true.

To say what is not true in print is not an extension of artistic freedom and an enlargement of imaginative consciousness, but a restriction of those qualities. Misrepresentations of the truth are never wholesome. Anyone who creates perverted images in fiction is guilty – perhaps of many things – certainly of creating bad art. That is why Islam mistrusts all art. The canvas as well as the camera can all too easily lie. The same goes for the novel. By these criteria *The Satanic Verses* is an artistic failure and, given its author's preconceptions, it could never have been anything else.

Privations – was not to take religion seriously enough. So Rushdie has become the focus – one might say the personal incarnation-of secular liberalism's low estimate of the truth-value of religious belief. Such 'liberals' need to be reminded that it is not liberal to say or write things which are not true; it is the censorship of the lie: it is restrictive of human understanding and necessarily so because it perverts the truth. . . .

... Freedom of speech does not mean that anyone can say just what he likes. It means that the rational use of language must, because language itself is rational, involve truth-value. No one is allowed to tell lies in the interests of free speech. For the lie is

not, properly, formally (in Wittgenstein's sense) speech at all: it is habel. It is the representation of reality as it is not. It is therefore a misuse of language, and that must, at the very lowest level, be had craftsmanship on the part of the wordsmith. Untruths and inaccuracies do not liberate people, but they enslave. It is always a disservice to give someone a false picture. If one misperceives reality, one pays for the misperception — as surely as missing the bottom step and spraining one's ankle. Rushdie is, in his way, paying for his misrepresentation of truth. . . .

And so, when Harold Pinter stood up and read cowering Rushdie's lecture at the ICA, it was evident that he was holding the Koran in one hand and *The Satanic Verses* in the other and, if he were forced to choose between them, he would prefer *The Satanic Verses*. This shows many things: above all it shows the bankruptcy of Western 'liberal' thought. For what is there in Rushdie's mediocre satire which can compare with the spiritual and moral authority of the Holy Koran? But the fashionable, avant-garde writers – literary peacocks – are actually not much good even at their own job: for they undervalue the weight and seriousness of language. They do not understand that the word is truly made flesh: that when you say something, you do something; that the great religious texts, the scriptures, are an index to humankind's commitment to what is deepest in us...

Rushdie has done a disservice to us all. By his clever derogatory remarks in *The Satanic Verses*, he has undermined our evaluation of what is supremely valuable in the religious tradition in which whole peoples have found their identity, in which some still seek to educate their children. . . .

Source: Dan Cohn-Sherbok (ed.), The Salman Rushdie Controversy in Interreligious Perspective, Lampeter, UK, The Edwin Mellen Press, 1990, pp. 30–1, 33–5 - "Salanic Asides"

# The Tale of Instant Experts on Islam

#### by Bhikhu Parekh

ince October is not so much their intolerance as their timidity, not their feeling of rage but a sense of hurt, not their anger but their distress. They quietly pursued the matter with the publishers, Members of Parliament, the Attorney-General and the Prime Minister. Neither its author nor its publishers seem to have taken them seriously enough to engage in a dialogue with them. According to Muslim leaders, the publishers either did not reply to their letters and telegrams or did so without any sense of urgency and seriousness. As for Rushdie himself, he tended nor understood the book and were only bent on suppressing a critical scrutiny of their cherished dogmas.

The British press was just as dismissive. Neither the quality nor the quantity papers published the offending passages, or invited Muslim spokesmen to state their case, or themselves made an attempt to read the book with their eyes. Instead they mocked the Muslims, accused them of 'intolerance', and wondered if a tolerant society should tolerate the intolerant. Although Muslims were intensely frustrated and angry, and although isolated individuals spoke of violence, no Muslims, to my knowledge, threatened Rushdie's or his wife's life, or even threw a stone at him or his house, something any one of the thousands of hotheads could have easily done at a time when he was unguarded and vulnerable.

... the book-burning incident led to a torrent of denunciation. Muslims were called 'barbarians', 'uncivilised', 'fanatics', and compared to the Nazis. Many a writer, some of impeccable liberal credentials, openly wondered how Britain could 'civilise' them and protect their innocent progeny against their parent's 'medieval fundamentalism'. Hardly anyone appreciated that the burning of The Satanic Verses was more an act of impatience than of intolerance, and that it bore no resemblance to the Nazi burning of libraries and persecution of intellectuals. No one cared to point out either that only a few months earlier, several Labour Members

of Parliament had burnt a copy of the new immigration rules outside the House of Commons without raising so much as a murmur of protest. . . .

The British press's reaction to the Muslim reaction, which it had done much to engineer, albeit unintentionally, followed a sad and predictable pattern. Not surprisingly, almost the entire British press got emotionally unhinged and lost its balance.

Most concentrated not on the book, the source of the controversy, but on the Muslim threat to Rushdie's life.

Anthony Burgess (The Independent, 16 February 1989) compared Muslims to Nazis who 'shame' Britain 'through the vindictive agency of bonfires'. Since they wanted a 'theocratic state' and did not like a secular society, they should 'fly to the arms of the Ayatollah or some self-righteous guardian of strict morality'. Their protest was mindless, 'unjustified by argument, thought or anything more intellectual than the throwing of stones [sic] or the striking of matches'. Even the otherwise sane and perceptive Peter Jenkins (The Independent, 1 March 1989) thundered against the Bradford auto-da-fē', that 'barbaric act of intolerance', and congratulated Mrs. Thatcher for standing up, like a good Christian, for a writer who had been rude to her.

All the newspapers, including the liberal, debated whether British society had an obligation to tolerate the intolerant and whether multi-culturalism was not a dangerous doctrine. An otherwise perceptive editorial in The Independent (18 February 1989) thundered against the evils of something called fundamentalism. A Guardian editorial asked Muslims to recognise that they were living in a secular society and that they must change their ways of thought and life. Several newspapers wondered if Britain had not made a 'mistake' in 'letting in' too many Muslims. Even Roy Jenkins, father of the Race Relations Act 1976, lamented that 'we might have been more cautious about allowing the creation in the 1950s [sic] of a substantial Muslim community here'. He went further and reached the most bizarre conclusion that the Muslim behaviour has strengthened 'my reluctance to have Turkey in the European community' (The Independent, 4 March 1989). Apparently all Muslims, like the proverbial Chinese, looked the same to him, and one threatened misdeed by a section of them was enough to damn the lot.

It was depressing to note . . . a wholly mindless anger first

against all *Bradford* Muslims, then against all *British* Muslims, then against all *Muslims*, and ultimately against *Islam* itself.

Some 'liberal' commentators, a few of them with a leftist past, such as Fay Weldon, became instant experts on the Koran. They attacked its alleged inhumanity and 'bloodthirsty' conception of Allah, unfavourably compared them to the Bible and its 'loving' God, and gave us most valuable insights into the psychology of the medieval crusaders. The neutral observers were left wondering on which side of the debate lay 'fundamentalism', 'medievalism' and 'intolerance'. The history of the last one thousand years with its crusades, the white man's – and latterly woman's – burden, and the 'civilising' empire, was tragicomically re-enacted before our eyes, and its white and brown *dramatis personae* parroted well-worn lines of their banal roles in all too familiar accents.

The conservative press fully shared these rather ugly feelings and was less inhibited about expressing them....

Source: Dan Cohn-Sherbok (ed.), The Salman Rushdie Controversy in Intereligious Perspective, Lampeter, UK, The Edwin Mellen Press, 1990, pp. 74-80-The Rushdie Affair and the British Press'.

# Liberalism's Holy War

#### by Richard Webster

Where is the freedom to publish which we prize so much? The answer is that the freedom of expression we enjoy is very narrowly constrained indeed. This is one reason why the arguments about freedom of expression, which liberals frequently advance in order to defend *The Satanic Verses*, are both ill-considered and, ultimately, dangerous. For these arguments are calmly advanced in a society where practically every medium of expression other than the novel is subject to the most complex and elaborate restrictions; where every programme that we watch on television has been vetted by guardians of public decency; where every film we see has been censored, and where the licence we extend to 'ar' encourages us to forget that every 'non-artistic' picture ever

published or displayed is subject to rigorous obscenity laws. These laws express, in their selective prohibitions and permissions, a seemingly profound antipathy to sexual love and a deep and almost insane horror of some of the most ordinary parts of the human body, particularly when these are conjoined in some of the most ordinary ways. Not only this, but in this same 'free' society, a law has recently been passed in which civil servants have been deprived of one of the most important freedoms which they had previously enjoyed under the law – the freedom to place the demands of conscience above the demands of their government.

#### On Not Burning Your Enemy's Flag

The noose of anti-Islamic prejudice was tied long ago. But the events which took place in Britain during 1989 have succeeded in putting the heads of hundreds of thousands of British Muslims inside that noose. That is why we must now begin to untie it. We should not underestimate how difficult this task will be, nor how long it will take. At the same time, however, we should be wary of replacing the West's irrational intolerance of Islam and all its works with an equally irrational and indiscriminate love of Islam. The consequences of inverting prejudice in this way can be seen all too clearly in the history of European and American attitudes towards Jews in this century. For what has happened in many quarters is that a profound and irrational anti-semitism has been replaced by an attitude which amounts to philo-semitism; in both Britain and America there has sometimes been a reluctance to criticise any Jewish or Israeli act and a tendency to release both Israeli politicians and Israeli soldiers from the normal constraints of political morality. . .

If we insult religious believers in this way, we are not demonstrating intellectual independence or proving that we have emancipated ourselves from our religious heritage. For, as I have already argued, one of the most distinctive characteristics of Judaeo-Christian monotheism is the contempt in which it holds other people's religious faith. If we secularise such religious intolerance and present it as a form of rationalist humanism we are in effect perpetrating one of the worst features of our religious tradition. If, marching under the banner of crusading humanism,

we not only insult religious believers, but compound the insult with obscenity, we are doing something which is profoundly repressive and profoundly destructive. For most religions do not disintegrate when they are insulted. They almost invariably internalise the hurt which is inflicted on them and grow more rigid and more cruel.

If we really want to make Islam into the most cruel and tyrannical religion there has ever been, we should go on insulting it as the West has been doing for very many centuries, and as Salman Rushdie is now doing on our behalf. If, however, we are at all interested in the future and vitality of our own culture, in respecting the dignity of Muslims, and in preserving ordinary human sensitivity, we should decide that we can do without a paperback of *The Satanic Verses*. We should also start to face up to our own responsibilities and recognise that Salman Rushdie has been betrayed into his terrible ordeal not primarily by his insensitivity but by ours. . . .

#### In Good Faith

It is such extreme language, which is potentially the most violent and the most insulting of all the registers available to Western writers, which, in the pages of *The Satanic Verses*, is brought into conjunction with some of the most sacred traditions of Islam. Although there are other perceived insults in the book, this in itself would be enough to create a sense of outrage among the Muslim faithful. When it is joined to the brothel scenes where the whores take the names of the Prophet's wives, to the knowing use the book makes of the street obscenities of Bombay and to the use of the ancient Christian term of abuse, Mahound, for Muhammad, it is little wonder that many Muslims have come to regard Rushdie not simply as an opponent of Islam, but as a cultural traitor who has sold some of their most sensitive secrets into the hands of the enemy.

#### A Brief History of Blasphemy

It must be said, however, that Muslims have very good reasons to be especially sensitive to such treatment of their own sacred figures. For both Christian polemicists and Western orientalists sought for centuries to denigrate Islam by attributing to it a fantastic, disreputable or demonic sexuality. And what almost all Muslims know, from their intuitive grasp of their own history, is that there is nothing remotely liberating in this kind of Western fantasy. For in the past such fantasies have always tended to belong to the propaganda which has preceded the sword, the bullet and the bomb. What Muslims see in Rushdie's fictional adaptations of ancient stereotypes is not simply hatred, but the long, terrible, triumphalist hatred which the West has had for Islam almost since its beginnings.

To find such hateful stereotypes revived not by one of their traditional enemies, but by a writer who was himself born to a Muslim family in Bombay, is especially hurtful. When ordinary Muslims in this country see that writer richly repaid for his irreverence, feted and celebrated both by intellectuals and by the Western media, while they are rewarded for their faith with ill-disguised contempt, it is little wonder that they feel betrayed in the most intimate and cruel manner, and feel at the same time that their own future existence, security and safety in the West is threatened. Given all this, it should not be surprising that Muslims in this country reacted to the publication of Rushdie's book in the way that they did, and that a number of them wrote in passionate terms to Penguin Books pleading for the book's withdrawal. It is not surprising either that, when these passionate pleas failed to produce any real response, these Muslims should have resorted to more dramatic methods, burning the book in public in an attempt to interest the media in their campaign. . . .

Source: Webster, R., A Brief History of Blasphemy, Orwell Press, Suffolk, 1990.

# RESPONSE FROM DIFFERENT FAITHS

# Letter from the Chief Rabbi

Sir, The appalling Rushdie affair has released, like Newton's Law, equal and opposite forces of elemental magnitude. It has incited religious passions on the one hand and freedom crusades

on the other on a scale and of an intensity probably unmatched in modern times.

In a search for legislative controls to defuse the current supertensions and to promote inter-religious co-existence, it has been suggested that the existing laws of blasphemy be extended beyond their strictly Christian confines. Some Christian and Muslim leaders have supported this idea. But I believe the solution lies elsewhere.

When the Chairman of the Islamic Society for the Promotion of Religious Tolerance in the UK asked me last October to support the protest against the publication of *The Satanic Verses*, I readily agreed, and he was informed that I deprecate not only the falsification of established historical records but the offence caused to the religious conviction and susceptibilities of counless citizens. In a civilised society we should generate respect for other people's religious beliefs and not tolerate a form of denigration and ridicule which can only breed resentment to the point of hatred and strife.

While I fully share the world-wide outrage at the murderous threat against the book's author, publishers and distributors, I stand by my view that the book should not have been published for the reasons I gave, now reinforced by subsequent events which have already cost many lives and may yet erupt into more sinister national and international upheavals.

In my view Jews should not seek an extension of the blasphemy laws. In any event, the Jewish definition of blasphemy is confined to "cursing God" and does not include an affront to any prophet (not even Moses, in our case). Living in a predominantly Christian society, with an established Church, we should be quite content to leave the legislation on blasphemy as it stands enshrining the national respect for the majority faith.

What should concern us are not *religious* offences but *socially* intolerable conduct calculated or likely to incite revulsion or violence, by holding up religious beliefs to scurrilous contempt, or by encouraging murder.

Both Mr Rushdie and the Ayatollah have abused freedom of speech, the one by provocatively offending the genuine faith of many millions of devout believers, and the other by a public call to murder, compounded by offering a rich material reward for an ostensibly spiritual deed. It should be illegal to allow either

provocation to be published or broadcast.

We already have legislation proscribing by common consent many excesses in the freedom of expression precious as this is. There are laws not only on blasphemy, but on pornography, libel, incitement of race hatred, subversion and breaches of national security. There may be arguments on the precise definition of these offences, but the principle is universally accepted.

Likewise there should be widespread agreement on prohibiting the publication of anything likely to inflame, through obscene defamation, the feelings or beliefs or any section of society, or liable to provoke public disorder and violence. It must obviously be left to public and parliamentary debate to determine where the lines of what is to be illegal are to be drawn.

If Britain were to pioneer such legislation, other nations would no doubt follow suit, perhaps even leading to an international agreement among all civilised people to protect the supreme values of innocent human life and freedom by outlawing the amplification of words which, as experience has now shown, by poisoning the atmosphere can be as lethal a threat to mankind as any physical pollution.

Yours sincerely, Jakobovits, Office of the Chief Rabbi

Permission to reproduce this letter, published in *The Times* (4th February, 1989), granted by the Chief Rabbi.

# Runcie Calls for Broader Legislation

#### by Sandra Barwick

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Robert Runcie, yesterday implicitly called for strengthening of the law against blasphemy to cover religions other than Christianity, in a statement which condemned incitement to murder.

Dr Runcie said that only the utterly insensitive could fail to see that the publication of Mr Rushdie's book, *The Satanic Verses*,

had deeply offended Muslims both here and throughout the world. "I understand their feelings and I firmly believe that offence to the religious beliefs of the followers of Islam or any other faith is quite as wrong as offence to the religious beliefs of Christians."

Source: ©The Independent, 21st February 1989 - 'Runcie Calls for Broader Legislation'

## BCC, 'Grave Concern' at Impact of Rushdie Controversy

'The British Council of Churches expresses grave concern at the damaging effect on inter-faith and community relations of the controversy surrounding Salman Rushdie's novel *The Satanic Verses*. We recognize something of the deep pain and hurt experienced in the British Muslim community because it believes that the Prophet of Islam has been dishonoured....

#### "... A Pre-Renaissance Habit of Mind?"

... Here is a book that can be read as attacking, however cloudily and symbolically, the probity of Islam's founder and the authenticity of the revelation he recorded. A comparable offence to Christianity would be held by many believers to be blasphemy. Leviticus declared blasphemy to deserve death by stoning; ... – Editorial, Church Times, 24th February 1989.

### '... Limits to the Right of Free Expression?'

'The row over Salman Rushdie's book The Satanic Verses raises important questions for us all. What are the limits to the right of free expression? What are the rights of religious communities to protection from insult? What are our duties as Christians to our Moslem neighbours? Christians must make special efforts to reach out humbly and lovingly to a community that feels rejected. And the Government, while protecting all citizens from violence, must look again at the law of blasphemy. If Christianity merits protection from insult, what about the other ancient religions with many followers in the land?' – Editorial, The Universe.

### 'Bishop Urges Publishers to Withdraw The Satanic Verses'

The Bishop of St Albans, the Rt Rev. John Taylor, yesterday called on Viking Penguin, publishers of *The Satanic Verses*, to withdraw the book and so defuse the row over the Ayatollah Khomeini's death threats against its author, Mr Salman Rushdie.

Bishop Taylor said Viking Penguin had succeeded commercially with the book 'beyond their wildest dreams' but had done so 'at the expense of the hurt feelings of the Moslem community.'

The Bishop said: 'By deciding to withdraw the book they would not only be making a wise commercial decision but also be showing moral responsibility for the havoc they have perhaps unwittingly caused'....

'They could make a responsible decision because of the social harm that has been caused to the people of Britain and the diplomatic row it triggered.' – *The Daily Telegraph*, 22nd March 1989.

#### The Inter-Faith Network UK

The Satanic Verses contains passages which were bound to cause deep offence to Muslims. There have been peaceful protests from them about the book for many months and inevitably a sense of frustration has developed as time has passed. In this country the Muslim community is a minority. They are naturally concerned about attacks upon the integrity of their faith and its misrepresentation. Like others, they are also concerned at attitudes in a society which does not always appear sympathetic to religious values in the community or in family life. — Interfaith Network (UK).

## World Conference on Religion and Peace

Dear Sir,

Now that the media discussion on *The Satanic Verses* is drawing to a close, it may be well to attempt a healing of the wounds which still afflict our society.

Long before the publication of this book, Muslims in Britain were trying to gain the same rights and protection accorded to other religious communities in our multi-cultural society. The Rushdie book, which Muslims regard as blasphemous, is only one aspect of a society showing itself to be insensitive to the needs

and pain in which Muslims find themselves. The courts have  $n_{0|k}$  ruled that the law of blasphemy is inapplicable, but the need  $l_0$  discuss this problem with inter-faith dialogue is even more urgent

We deplore all calls to violence which contravene the highest aspirations of all religious traditions. Muslims in Britain have shown themselves to be peace-loving and law-abiding citizens, and responsible Muslim leaders are resolved to approach this problem within the framework of law. It is our hope that inequalities in that law will be redressed and that all minority religions will be fully protected.

The World Conference on Religion and Peace associates itself with our Muslim friends, and would like to move from the present debate to a more sympathetic appraisal of Islamic life in our society. It is our hope that writers and publishers will now exercise more self-discipline in dealing with the most sacred beliefs of their religious neighbours.

We are deeply concerned that the end result of the affair could lead to persecution of the Muslims in the Western world. If any act of terrorism were to take place this would be a tragedy, and we can only affirm our belief that non-violent protest is a more effective and religious response.

Everyone must join together in challenging extremism and in creating a climate of free discussion.

Yours faithfully,

Canon Gordon Wilson (Christian), Rabbi Albert H. Friedlander (Jewish), Mr. B. Konnur (Hindu), Dr. Syed Aziz Pasha (Muslim). Professor Harmindar Singh (Sikh), Mr. Pankay Vora (Jain).

World Conference on Religion and Peace, London E1. - The Independent, 16th March 1989.

Source: Focus on Christian-Muslim Relations: The Rushdie Affair - Responses and Reactions (Leicester), 3 (1989), pp. 3, 4, 5, 9, 10.

#### Voices of Civility

# Cardinals Speak on Rushdie but Pope is Silent

#### by Brian Dooley

In France, Cardinal Albert Decourtray of Lyon slammed the work as "an offence against religious faith". In a public statement the president of the French bishops' conference ... complained; "Once again the faith of believers is insulted. Yesterday it was Christians who were offended by a film which disfigured the face of Christ. Today it is the Moslems by this book about the Prophet ...".

In America, Cardinal John O'Connor of New York expressed solidarity with local Moslems upset about *The Satanic Verses*. "We deplore the belittling or ridiculing of anyone's religion"...

One Vatican historian, Fr Robert Graham, has urged the Pope to speak out against the criticisms of Islam in the book. "It constitutes a severe, lacerating criticism of Islam, and in particular of the prophet Mohammad himself."...

Source: Catholic Herald, 3rd March 1989 – 'Cardinals Speak on Rushdie but Pope is Silent'.

# Rushdie Denounced as a Blasphemer by Vatican Paper

# by Michael Sheridan and Tim Kelsey

The Vatican newspaper, L'Osservatore Romano, condemned Salman Rushdie's novel, The Satanic Verses, as blasphemous at the weekend, and implied that there was no right to free speech for blasphemers....

L'Osservatore Romano said that free speech was no defence for Mr Rushdie. "It is not the first time that, by invoking artistic motives or the principle of free expression, people have sought to justify the improper use of sacred texts or religious elements,

## Sacrilege versus Civility

which thereby become blasphemous." . . .

Source: ©The Independent, 6th March 1989 - 'Rushdie Denounced as a Blasphemer by Vatican Paper'.

## Graham Backs Muslims on Verses

The evangelist Billy Graham said yesterday that he sympathised with Muslims protesting against Salman Rushdie's book, The Satanic Verses.

At a press conference to launch his Mission 89 crusade to London he compared demonstrations against the book with Christian protests in the US against the film, The Last Temptation of Christ, which many thought was blasphemous...

Source: ©The Guardian, 2nd June 1989 - 'Graham Backs Muslims on Verses'.

## Church Leaders Unite to Condemn BBC

The BBC programme The Blasphemers' Banquet, which trenchantly defended Mr Salman Rushdie and heaped scorn on religious fundamentalism, was condemned in Bradford yesterday.

The Bishop of Bradford, the Rt Rev Robert Williamson, called the programme distressing and insulting to a Muslim community which already felt humiliated. . . .

He regretted that instead of showing the sort of smiling, cheerful Muslim children he was familiar with in Bradford schools, the programme repeatedly showed "revolting scenes of Muslim fanatics teaching their children to hit their heads until they bled"....

Source: ©The Guardian, 2nd August 1989 - 'Church Leaders Unite to Condemn BBC'.

#### Voices of Civility

## For further reading:

- Roald Dahl, 'Letter to the Editor', The Times, 28th February,
- John Vincent, 'Outrage We Cannot Ignore', The Times, 2nd March, 1989.
- Robert Harris, 'Satanic Whiff of Money and Vitriol Takes the Air', The Times, 11th February, 1990.
- Edward de Bono, 'The Satanic Verses', The Times, 16th February, 1990.
- Jack Mahoney, 'Bounds of Blasphemy', The Times, 11th April, 1990.
- Rustom Bharucha, 'The Rushdie Affair: Secular Bigotry and the Ambivalence of Faith', *Third Text*, 11 (Summer 1990), pp. 62-8
- 'Faith Moves a Mountain', The Times, 26th December, 1990.
- Christine M. Cottam, 'The Crusades View of Islam', *The Guardian*, 12th July, 1990.
- 'Faith Moves a Mountain', The Times, 26th December, 1990.
- 'Rushdie Did Hurt Muslims, says Carey', The Daily Telegraph, 23rd November, 1991.
- Richard Webster, 'A 20th Century Crusade', *The Bookseller*, 10th July, 1992.

#### CHAPTER 5

# The Muslim Argument

The 'Satanic' Verses and the Orientalists\*
(A note on the authenticity of the so-called Satanic verses)

by M.M. Ahsan

A number of leading Orientalists have made special studies of the Qur'ān and some of them have translated it into European languages. On the whole the attitude of such scholars of the Occident has been unsympathetic and sometimes hostile. There are a few who still regard the Qur'ān as the writing of the Prophet, şallā Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam, and not, as the Muslims regard it, the word of God revealed through the angel Gabriel. Many take pains to point out the alleged borrowing of the Qur'ān from Judaeo-Christian sources. Such erroneous assertions have taken on a formulaic significance and echoes of it are too often heard even after new researches have shown otherwise.

A reader of secondary writings of Islam becomes puzzled when he finds two diametrically opposed conclusions reached by Orientalist and Muslim writers using the same sources and materials. It seems that Muslims are not far wrong when they allege that the Orientalists build their edifice on the foundations of so-called objectivity, using the tools of analytical research and critical examination which leads to interpretations not necessarily based on facts but pure speculation, hypothetical assumption and that

<sup>\*</sup>This is a revised version of the article that appeared in *Hamdard Islamicus*, Vol. 5, No. 1. Spring 1982, pp. 27–36.

sometimes a deliberate attempt has been made by many Orientalists to cast doubt on the teachings of Islam by challenging the authenticity of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. Christian, Marxisi and Jewish Orientalists have quite often tried to prove, directly or indirectly, that at least some portions of the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth are fabricated or inconsistent and are, therefore, unreliable sources for the Islamic way of life. However, such Orientalists have based their attack on the flimsiest of intellectual grounds In this paper, an attempt has been made to analyse the Orientalists' allegations about the incorporation of the so-called Satanic verses' in the Qur'ān – a theme discussed with relish by almost all Westem writers on the life of the Prophet.

Before proceeding further, let us look at the story of the so-called 'Satanic' verses' which Orientalists like William Muir, Theodor Noldeke, among earlier writers, and W. Montgomery Watt among contemporary 'biographers' of the Prophet, narrate with their usual 'masterly' comments. These writers apparently base the story on some historical sources which, at first sight, seem quite weighty but on critical investigation fail to satisfy the criteria of historical criticism. Muslim writers in the past such as Ibn Ishāq, Ibn Hishām, al-Suhaylī (the commentator of Ibn Hishām and the author of Rawd al-Unuf), Ibn Kathīr, al-Bayhaqi, Qādī 'Iyād, Ibn Khuzaymah, ar-Rāzī, al-Qurṭubī, al-'Aynī, al-Shawkānī, etc., as well as contemporary and near contemporary writers like Abul A'lā Mawdūdī, Sayyid Quṭb, Muḥammad Husayn Haykal, etc., have all rejected the story as preposterous and without foundation.

At-Tabari, Ibn Sa'd and some other Muslim writers have mentioned (though they vary considerably in matters of detail) that the Prophet Muhammad, şallā Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam, under Satanic inspiration added two verses to Sūrah an-Najm (53), which are as follows:7

[These are the high-soaring ones (deities), whose intercession is to be hoped for!]

The Prophet, it is alleged, recited these along with other verses of Sūrah an-Najm in the prayer. The idolaters of Makkah who

were present in the Ka'bah at that time joined him in the prayer because he praised their deities and thus won their hearts. The story afterwards reached Abyssinia where the Muslims persecuted by the Makkan infidels had earlier migrated and many of them returned to Makkah under the impression that the disbelievers no longer opposed the Prophet and the Islamic movement. The story also says that the angel Gabriel came to the Prophet the same evening and told him about the mistake he had committed by rectling verses which were never revealed to him. This naturally worned the Prophet and made him apprehensive. Then, 'admonishing' the Prophet, God revealed the following verses of Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl, which read:

ك إن كا دُو الكَيْفَتِينُونُ مَكَ عَنِ الّذِي اوحينا إليكَ لِتَفْرُونَ عَلَينا غَارُهُ وَ وَإِن كَا دُولًا إلى شَبْنَكَ لَعَدَا كِذَتْ تَرَكُ الْهِم وَ وَإِذَا لَا أَنْ شَبْنَكَ مَعْدَ الْمَاتِ ثَفُمًا شَيتًا كُلِيلًا - (دُا لَا لَا تُونُونُ وَضِعْفَ المَاتِ ثُفُمًا لَا يَجِدُ الْمَاتِ شُفُمًا لَا يَجِدُ لَكَ عِبعف الْجَيلُوةِ وضِعْفَ المَاتِ ثُفُمًا لَا يَجِدُ اللّهَ اللّهَ عَلَيناً الْحِدْدِيلًا \* . (بنى اسرا ثبل - ٣ - ٥٥) -

They were constantly trying to tempt you away from that which We have revealed to you, so that you may substitute in its place something of your own, in which case they would have actively taken you as a friend. And if We had not made you firm, you might have indeed inclined to them a little. Then We would have made you taste a double punishment in this life and a double punishment after death and then you would not have found any helper against Us. (17: 73-5)

This made the Prophet feel very guilty until God revealed the following consoling verse of Surah al-Hajj:

Whenever We sent a Messenger or a Prophet before you and he framed a desire, Satan put obstacles in it. Then Allah

removes the obstacles placed by Satan and He firmly establishes His signs. (22: 52)

This is the gist of the story mentioned by at-Tabarī and some other writers which has been used by the Orientalists to reinforce their views on the Qur'ān. The story would, among other things, imply that the Prophet and his Companions took the 'Satanic' verses as a true revelation from God, otherwise nobody would have accepted them.

Let us now examine the story and its contents in the light of internal and external evidence and evaluate it on the basis of criteria of historical criticism. In doing so, first of all one has to find out the chronological sequence in the story and establish whether or not all its details relate to one period and are interconnected. Special attention should also be devoted to determining the periods of revelation of the three verses mentioned in the report which will validate or falsify the episode.

It can be easily gleaned from the story that the incident of reciting the 'Satanic' verses and the consequent prostration of the disbelievers in the Ka'bah happened after the first batch of Muslims had migrated to Abyssinia. This migration, according to all reliable historical sources, occurred in the month of Rajab of the fifth year of the Prophetic call or about eight years before the Hijrah to Madinah. Therefore, the incident must have happened close to this date and not long after the migration to Abyssinia.

The verses of Sūrah Bani Isrā'il (17: 73–5) which were revealed, according to the story, to 'admonish' the Prophet for allegedly reciting the 'Satanic verses', in fact were not revealed until after the event of the Mi'rāj. The Mi'rāj or the Ascent of the Prophet, according to historical sources, occurred in the tenth or eleventh year of the Prophetic call, i.e. about two or three years before the Hijrah to Madinah. If this is so, then it implies that the 'Satanic' verses were not detected or for some reason no mention was made about the alleged interpolation of the verses for five or six years and only afterwards was the Prophet admonished for it. Can any sensible person, asks Abul A'lā Mawdūdī, believe that the interpolation occurs today, while the admonition takes place six years later and the abrogation of the interpolated verses is publicly announced after nine years (cf. Sīrat-i Sarwar-i 'Ālam, Vol. 2, p.

574). The relevant verse of Sūrah al-Ḥajj (22: 52) according to the commentators of the Qur'ān was revealed in the first year of the Hijrah, i.e. about eight to nine years after the incident and about two and a half years after the so-called admonition of the Prophet (17: 73-5).8 Could anybody who knows about the Qur'ān, its history and revelation, understand and explain how the incident of interpolation was allowed to be tolerated for six years and also why the offensive 'verses' were not abrogated until after nine years? Watt's theory is that 'the earliest versions do not specify how long afterwards this (abrogation) happened; the probability is that it was weeks or even months'9 is nothing but a hypothesis. Had he investigated the chronology of the three revelations relative to the story, he could not possibly have missed the facts related above.

Let us now turn to some internal evidence. It has been said in the story that the 'Satanic' interpolation occurred in Sūrah an-Najm (53: 19f.) which delighted the idolaters present in the Ka'bah and as a gesture of friendship and good-will, they all bowed down with the Prophet. In order to comment on the story it would seem necessary to read the verses in the Qur'ān, adding the two alleged 'Satanic' verses, and find out what is actually meant to be conveyed here. It would read as follows:

آ فَيْ وَ يُستُمُ اللّٰتَ وَالْعُنْى وَمَنْوةَ النَّالِنَةَ اَلاُخُلَى الْكُمْ اللّٰكَمْ اللّٰكَمْ اللّٰكَ وَلَهُ الْإَسْنَالُا اللّهُ عَلَى اللّهُ الللّهُ اللللللللّهُ اللّهُ اللّهُ اللّهُ اللللللّهُ الللّهُ الللللّهُ

Have you considered al-Lat and al-'Uzza and Manat, the third, the other! These are the high-soaring ones (deities) whose intercession is to be hoped for! Are the males for you and for Him (God) the females? This indeed is an unjust division. They are but names which you have named, you and your fathers, for which God has revealed no authority. They follow but conjecture and what (their) souls desire. And now the guidance has come to them from their Lord. (53: 19-23)

If one reads the italicized part of the alleged Satanic verses quoted above, one fails to understand how God on the one hand is praising the deities and on the other discrediting them by using the subsequent phrases quoted above. It is also difficult to see how the Quraysh leaders drew the conclusion from this chapter that Muhammad, sallā Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam, was making a conciliatory move and was adopting a policy of give and take.

Drawing conclusions from various reports connected with the story. Watt suggests that 'at one time Muhammad must have publicly recited the Satanic verses as part of the Qur'an; it is unthinkable that the story could have been invented later by Muslims or foisted upon them by non-Muslims. Secondly, at some later time Muhammad announced that these verses were not really part of the Qur'an and should be replaced by others of a vastly different import'. 10 Watt's suggestion that Muhammad replaced the 'Satanic' verses with some others of a vastly different import is pure speculation. If one takes the 'Satanic verses' to be true, it would imply that the verses to be found in 53: 19f. were not revealed in the same period. Watt's suggestion also implies that Muhammad and his followers read the 'Satanic' verses in place of or in addition to the verses found in the Our'an for 'weeks and even months' and that when Muhammad later realized that these verses could not be correct, then the true version and continuation of the passage was revealed to him. This supposition is again pure speculation and is not based on any historical data. The story which we have summarized in the beginning suggests that Muhammad did not realize his fault until God admonished him six years later and that the matter was rectified perhaps another two and a half years after.

It is obvious that Watt and other Orientalists accept part of the story and reject the other parts apparently because they are unable to find any link or sequence. Had there been any element of truth in the story, it could have caused a scandal against Islam and the Prophet and every detail must have found its place in the Hadith literature. Why is the authentic Hadīth collection (namely the Siḥāh Sittah) conspicuously silent about the scandalous part of the story? Does it not lead to the conclusion, contrary to the established fact, that Hadīth literature itself is very defective as it failed to record such an important event which led the Prophet

and his Companions to read 'Satanic' verses for weeks, months or perhaps even years without realizing their error? In fact, al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawud, Nasa'i and Ahmad b. Hanbal all record the story but only to the extent that was true. They all mention that the Prophet did recite Surah an-Najm and, at the end when he prostrated, the idolaters present were so overawed that they also joined him in prostration. These leading Muhaddithun do not mention the blasphemous story which other sources have recorded. The fact that the idolaters became overawed and joined Muhammad in prostration is not difficult to believe as they all knew what magical effect the Qur'an exercised on the listeners which was one of the reasons why they called the Qur'an a magic and the Prophet a وَالْعَالِنَّ هَذَاكَيْحُرُ مُبِينٌ ( بولن - ١٠)-تمال الكفرون إن فهذا تساحر شين - ايون - ١- المون الم There is much historical data to substantiate the validity of this statement. It will suffice to retell the story of the acceptance of Islam by 'Umar I and the listening to the Qur'an by the jinns ... ] نَّهُ السَّمَعَ لَغَنُ مِنَ الحِنْ نَقَالُوا إِنَّا سَمِنًا مُرَّاناً عَجِبًا [ البِهِنْ -أ)-(N: 1). It is quite likely that after their prostration the Quraysh were very ashamed and tried to hide their shame by inventing the story that they heard Muhammad praising their deities which made them join him in prostration. The news of the idolaters and Muslims prostrating together spread quickly and it even reached Abyssinia with the additional rumour that Muhammad had reconciled with the Quraysh and that hostility no longer existed between them.

Apart from the absurd nature of the story and the external and internal criticism which it cannot stand, there is another criterion of evaluation which one should not lose sight of. The Muslim traditionists quite often evaluate *Ḥadīth* on the basis of *riwāyah* (the statement or the news based on the chain of narrators and the text of the *Ḥadīth*) as well as *dirāyah* (credibility of the statement). It means that if something has been attributed to the Prophet of Islam through apparently sound *Ḥadīth*, it will not automatically be accepted if it goes against the Qur'ān and other established traditions and cannot be justified by reasoning. <sup>11</sup> It is here that even if one regards the story of the 'Satanic verses' to be sound on the ground that it has been narrated by a number

of Muslim scholars or because it conforms to the requirements of a true narration (which it lacks), no Muslim traditionist will accept this story because it stands in clear contradiction to the established beliefs of the Muslims. The first few verses of Sūrah an-Najm themselves very clearly say:

By the star when it sets; your companion errs not, nor does he deviate; nor does he speak out of desire. It is nothing but revelation that is revealed – One Mighty in power has taught him. (53: 1-5)

In Surah al-Jinn (72: 26-8), it is further declared:

He reveals not His secrets to any, except to him whom He chooses as a Messenger; for surely He makes a guard to march before him and after him, so that He may know that they have truly delivered the Message of their Lord.

These and other verses make it clear that it is not possible for the Prophet to accept anything in the Qur'ān from any external source. If this is so, then how can one take seriously, let alone believe in the so-called story of the 'Satanic revelation'? This is why the leading traditionists and exegetists in Islam have regarded the story as malicious and without foundation. It is unfortunate that an eminent historian like at-Tabarī mentioned this story in his Ta'rīkh and did not make any comment on it. It is to be noted that early Muslim historians although meticulous in their isnād sometimes acted like a 'tape-recorder', recording anything that came to their knowledge from a sound and apparently reliable source. In a bid to remain objective and convey the message in pure form they seldom gave their own opinion and refrained from

analysing the events thereby guiding the reader to their authenticity or otherwise. At-Tabari was no exception. This he makes very clear at the outset in the following words: 'This book of mine may [be found] to contain some information, mentioned by us on the authority of certain men of the past, which the reader may disapprove of and the listener may find detestable, because he can find nothing sound and no real meaning in it. In such cases, he should know that it is not our fault that such information comes to him, but the fault of someone who transmitted it to us. We have merely reported it as it was reported to us'. 12 Although there is great advantage in such a methodology there are also risks. Unscrupulous people may take advantage of this and try to concoct something as they did indeed in the fabrication of the malicious story of the so-called 'Satanic Verses'. This is why more cautious historians of a later period such as Ibn al-Athir criticized at-Tabari for his bad historical and literary judgement with regard to some of the material contained in his book. The fact that at-Tabari, Ibn Sa'd and some other historians and scholars recorded this story in their works does not prove that the story itself is true. Modern researchers know that there are a number of reports and events which have been proved incorrect in the light of historical criticism and other available facts. One may refer, for instance, to the article 'Abbasa in the new edition of the Encyclopaedia of Islam, where at-Tabari's report that Harun ar-Rashid's sister 'Abbasah was secretly in love with Harun's vizier, has been proved incorrect and misleading. 13

#### Notes and References

 There have been very few scholarly writings by Muslims in the English language about Orientalists' views on Islam in general and on the Qur'an in particular. For a survey of literature on Orientalism, see my bibliography entitled 'Orientalism and the Study of Islam in the West – A Select Bibliography published in the Muslim World Book Review, Vol. 1, No. 4,1981, pp. 51-60. To this list, Orientalism, Islam and Islamists edited by A. Hussain, R. Olson and J. Qureshi (Amana Books, 1984) may be added.

2. In Muslim sources the whole saga is known as Hadīth al-Gharānīq or the tradition of Gharānīq, the high-soaring ones. William Muir was perhaps the first Orientalist to name them 'Satanic verses'. A recent Jewish researcher of Islam regards the episode as 'one of the most striking instances of "abrogation" and "substitutions" 'and suggests that it is called 'Satanic' because of its pagan connotation. Cf. Ilse Lichtenstadter, 'A Note on the

Gharaniq and Related Qur'anic Problems', Israel Oriental Studies, 5

(1975), pp. 54-61.

3. This article has been inspired by the writings of Mawlana Abul Ala Mawdudi and is based, among other sources, on his monumental Qur'ang exegesis, Tafhim al-Qur'an and his study on the life of the Prophet entitled Sirat-i Sarwar-i 'Alam, both in Urdu. It is unfortunate that, due to his death in September, 1979, Mawlana Mawdudi could not complete his entique of the Orientalists' writings on the Sirah of the Prophet - a desire which his predecessor, 'Allamah Shibli Nu'mani (1857-1914) the celebrated author of the Sirai an-Nabi, also took to the grave and was not able to accomplish during his lifetime for various reasons.

4. Watt devotes more than eight pages in his Muhammad at Mecca, Oxford, 1960, pp. 101-9, to narrating and evaluating the story. A summary of this also appears in his 1968 publication What is Islam?, Longman and Libraine de Liban, pp. 42-5; the new edition of this book (1979) also retains the story without any change. See also, The Introduction to the Our an originally written by Richard Bell, but revised by him, Edinburgh, 1970, pp. 55-6. For similar far-fetched arguments and analysis of the story see Michael M.J. Fischer and Mehdi Abedi, 'Bombay Talkies, the Word and the World: Salman Rushdie's Satanic Verses', Cultural Anthropology, Washington, Vol. 5, No. 2, 1990, pp. 107-59, in particular pp. 124-30. Note their curious argument. 'The story that Muhammad could have used the Satanic suggestion is rejected by almost all exegetes, but the fact that the story persists as a subject of exegetes' discussions is testimony to the reality of the temptation both for Muhammad and for later Muslims in their own struggles with such 'Babylons' as London, New York, Paris, or Hamburg' (p. 127).

This is why some of the more discerning scholars in the West such as the Italian L. Caetani and the Briton John Burton have rejected the story as baseless and suggested different motives for the concoction of the outrageous tale (cf. L. Caetani, Annali, dell' Islam (Milan, 1906), No. 1, pp. 279-81; J. Burton, 'Those are the High-Flying Cranes', Journal of Seminic

Studies, Vol. 15, No. 2, 1970, pp. 246-65)

6. Abul A'la Mawdudi in his Urdu Qur'anic exegesis, Tafhim al-Qur'an, Lahore, 1972, Vol. 3, pp. 238-45, and Sirat-i Sarwar-i 'Alam, Lahore, 1979, Vol. 2, pp. 572-8, critically examines all the aspects of the story and evaluates the writings of early Muslim scholars on the subject quite thoroughly. See also, among others, Sayvid Outb, Fi Zilal al-Our'an. Beirut, 1974, Vol. 4, pp. 2431-3; M.H. Haykal, The Life of Muhammad translated into English by Isma'il R. al-Faruqi, North American Trust Publications, 1976, pp. 105-14, and Zakaria Bashier, The Meccan Crucible. London, 1978, pp. 180-6.

7. Several variants of these two spurious verses have been quoted which are

as follows:

النزَانِعَكُ العُلل مِن شَفَاعِطَئُنَ بَرُبَّهِل . إِنْهَا لَهِنَ النَرَانِقِ العُلل . وَإِنَّ هُنَّ مَعُنَّ النَّرَانِقِ العُلل وَإِنَّ شُفَا عَثَعُلَ مَعِمَانِقَ تُرَبَّل. وَإِنَّ هُنَّ مَعُنَّ النَّرَانِقِ العُلل وَإِنَّ شُفَا عَثَعُلَ مَعِمَانِقَ تُرْبَيل. .... و لا تُنفَى عَسُفَنَ تُرجِى - (بدون الأحقة الأول العُوانِينُ أوالدُانِقَة ع

For a fuller discussion of this argument see the Urdu biography (incomplete) of the Prophet by Abul A la Mawdudi entitled Sirat-i Sarwar-i 'Alam, Lahore, 1979, Vol. 2, pp. 573-7.

W Montgomery Watt, Muhammad at Mecca, Oxford University Press,

1960, p. 103. 10. Ibid.

11 The History of at-Tabari (Ta'rikh al-Rusul wal-Muluk), Vol. I, General Introduction and from the Creation to the Flood, translation and annotation by Franz Rosenthal, New York, 1989, pp. 170-1.

12 Cl. Encyclopaedia of Islam, s.v. 'Abbasa (by J. Horovitz).

# Publishing Sacrilege is Not Acceptable

## by M.H. Faruqi

Living in London, the cultural capital of the English language and exposed to all media distortion and denigration of Islam and Muslims (nothing is ever right about them), one must conless, one has got used to the thing. It is not unconcern or insensitivity, as far as we in Impact are concerned. Our attitude to the problem, painful as it is, is based on the recognition of our own limitations and of the reality that the problem is large and long-term and can only be tackled over a period of time. It concerns the place and value of Islam in our own lives and in Muslim societies which claim to be sovereign. The outsider cannot respect us more than we respect ourselves.

The factors of prejudice are historical and political. Challenged by the rise of a superior social, economic and political culture based on unadulterated Abrahamic Faith, the then 'Christian' West had to 'fantasticate' and invent a 'Mahound', a devil god, in order to prevent its flock from being influenced by the pure Message and clean life of Muhammad, peace and blessing of God be upon him. A whole corps of missionary orientalists was raised but in order not to understand Islam and then criticise and counter it. The purpose was to confuse and distort lest their own people were attracted to Islam which was not a new faith: It was a continuation, confirmation and completion of the faith of Jesus and Moses (may God's peace be upon them).

As long as the Muslim world had political and intellectual vigour and Muslim society presented itself as an open book on Islam, it was possible for the non-Muslim to compare the orientalist version with this 'open book' and decide for himself, and people went on deciding and accepting the Truth, Islam. That situation has vastly changed. The earlier corps of missionary orientalists has since been fortified by a later arrival of Zionist orientalists and now we are beginning to have Hindu 'experts of Islam'.

The Muslim response to this intellectual development has less to do with setting their own house in order, protecting their own political and intellectual sovereignty and building and strengthen-

ing their institution of learning.

On popular level we have declarations and denunciations: declarations which betray lack of seriousness and denunciations which are patently hollow. On official plane Muslim institutions and authorities bend over backwards to appease the very same experts. Not long ago these 'experts' used to be invited even help draft their family law and advise on 'reforming' Islam. Today a whole set of similar experts are busy writing laws and blue-prints for social, economic and educational policy for the entire Muslim world.

The Western media is sought to be appeased by expensive public relations exercises and offering them huge advertising largesse. In the end, the regimes end up with losing both their money and their throne. Although one feels immediately affected by whatever is done by the electronic or the print media because it is an ongoing affair and more often than not the slights and abuses are very hurtful, yet the media can be regarded as quite innocent of them all. Firstly, most of the journalists, columnists and editorial writers, in reporting or commenting about Islam and Muslim world are – presumably quite honestly – only drawing from the perceptions and resource file of their experts, orientalist and Islamologists. Secondly, how can a non-Muslim journalist or writer be expected to respect Islam or Muslim sensitivities when

he or she finds Muslims themselves showing a great lack of self-respect.

In a situation characterised by both insult and lack of self-respect, one needs a great store of patience and composure, to ignore the negatives and to concentrate on the positives. Rather than try to worry and shout what the Western media should or should not do, one could more usefully think and do 'whatever one can to present our own fact file, the Muslim world view and a Muslim interpretation of ideas and events. Not to say that nothing more cannot be done, but it is more practical to do whatever can be done within the given parameters.

So when last month someone rang to ask, 'What are you going to do about *The Satanic Verses*?', we said, 'Nothing'. *The Satanic Verses* would be what they say they are and can be left for their

devotees to recite and enjoy.

Salman Rushdie or 'Simon Rushton', as some of his friends like to call him, is a known character, who, until recently, made no apology about whatever he is: A self-hating Indo-Anglian, totally alienated from his culture, who has also learnt that it is possible to make money by selling self-hate. One had heard about the book mid 1986 when Rushdie was still going through his dirty word processor. It was said to be a social novel about India and Pakistan, the usual subject of the author's sado-masochism, but one had no clue as to what filth he was going to come up with his time. The book was published in Britain last month and we are waiting for the review copy to arrive — which did not — and, finteresting, to do a piece on this latest tome from this growingly interesting author — in the light of the advance publicity lavished by the media.

Two things arrived nearly about the same time. One, a letter from The Islamic Foundation, Leicester, along with a copy of some extracts from The Satanic Verses; and two, the news that responding to strong protest by the Muslim leadership in India, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi had promptly acted to ban the entry of the title under the Customs Act (though by then some 300 copies had reached Delhi and obviously many had gone under the counter). The extracts read here were utterly shocking and outrageous. Both the writer and the publisher, Viking (an imprint of the more well known Penguin), had gone over the top. The advance reviews of this book and interviews with Rushdie pub-

lished in Indian magazines made it absolutely clear that the sacrilege was deliberate.

We concede the freedom of an individual even to fantasise filth and to put down his outpouring on a piece of paper if it gave him any enjoyment. The vermin too has its own culture, but as the Indian Muslim MP, Syed Shahabuddin said, no civilised society should allow the *publication* of filth and pollute the human environment.

Faced with the rising anger of the Muslim community, Rushdie was now saying: 'How could I be anti-Muslim when my whole family is Muslim?' Absolute rubbish. To be a traitor, one has to belong to the community one intends to betray. Moreover few of the reviewers or interviewers who have written about him in adulating terms were in any doubt that he was anything but a lapsed believer, nor did he claim otherwise. 'I was religious in quite an unthinking way. Now, I am not', he told Mark Lawson of The Independent Magazine (10th September 1988). He was 'someone who would no longer describe himself as religious' Rushdie told The Observer, (25th September 1988).

Rushdie also said that pages from the book were 'being taken out of context by groups trying to grab attention' and, as if to balance sacrilege, 'there is another scene which contrasts profane living with the puritanism of the new religion'. He has also written an angry letter to Mr Rajiv Gandhi.

One - 'The book isn't about Islam, but about migration, metamorphosis, divided selves, love, death, London and Bombay'.

Two-'It deals with a prophet (who is not called Muhammad)'.

Three - Moreover, 'this entire sequence happens in a dream, fictional dream, of a fictional character'.

Four - 'In this dream sequence, I have tried to offer my view of the phenomenon of revelation, the birth of a great world religion: and that view is that of a secular man for whom Islamic culture has been of central importance all his life'.

But Rushdie's defence is hedging around the truth. . . .

The statement that 'actually' the book is not about Islam is falsehood. Six of the nine 'Chapters' deal with an Islamic theme, Islamic symbolism, and with real Islamic characters only thinly disguised by a mix of fantasy and absurd. The 'prophet' Rushdie deals with is not called Muhammad, but he compounds the

Masphemy by using the derogatory European Middle Ages snonym of Mahound.

It matters little if 'this entire sequence happens in a dream, fictional dream, of a fictional character', because here we are dealing with the creator of that so-called fiction. Fiction and fantasy are no license for insult and profanity. A deranged mind can dream any dream but the moment he begins to insult and provoke then he enters the no go area. If he has true friends around him, they will ask him to shut up.

Fact of the matter is that not having the courage or the ability of a scholar, Rushdie has simply tried to hide behind the thin veneer of dream and fiction, but his fantasy is very much part of his psyche. . . .

He claims the book is not 'actually' about Islam, yet he also wants to take credit for offering 'my view of the phenomenon of revelation, and the birth of a great world religion'. He also claims that "Islamic culture has been of central importance all his life', about in a secular way. If that is so then probably many of his finends and girl-friends must be itching to convert to this Islam. The fact is that apart from making money out of sacrilege, Rushdie would also like to subvert Islamic values so that no one can point a finger at his 'secular' way of life.

However, Rushdie was more forthcoming and truthful when he was speaking to *India Today*, (15th September 1988). He was not trying to equivocate. He was speaking with a sense of coming triumph.

Parts of the novel have been in my head since I first began to study Islamic history at the University 20 years ago . . . Actually, one of my major themes is religion and fanaticism. I have talked about the Islamic religion because that is what I know most about

There changed names. I have given the name of an Egyptian temple, Abu Simbel, to the leader of Mecca. I have not called the cities by their names. After all this is a visionary thing (sic) . . .

The book is really about the fact that an idea or a new thing in the world must decide whether to compromise or not. Beyond that, the image out of which the book grew was of the prophet going to the mountain and not being able to tell the difference between the angel and the devil.'

This amply illustrates Rushdie's 'vision', sick or altruistic, as it

may be. As long as such fantasy is confined to one's private thoughts or even writings, there would be little cause for anyone to concern himself with it, except the person's own psychiatrist. But to publish illiterate sacrilege and to try to make money out of it on the excuse that it is a work of great literary merit, is not acceptable.

The Muslim community in Britain – and so would be others as information reaches them in course of time – is shocked and outraged beyond any describable measure by the unprecedented enormity of this sacrilege and by the fact that so far a respectable publisher. Penguin, has been insensitive enough to lend its name to this extreme profanity.

Muslim organisations in Britain are, therefore, asking Penguin: One – To withdraw and pulp all the copies of *The Satanic Verses* and to undertake not to reprint it in the future.

Two-To offer unqualified public apology to the World Muslim community.

Three - To pay damages equal to the returns received from the copies already sold in Britain and abroad.

Failing which they are asking Muslim authorities to freeze all Penguin and Viking business in their jurisdictions and to exempt from copyright law such titles as may be needed for educational purposes. The book should be banned in any case, but banning is meaningless unless it is accompanied by deterrent measures.

These demands have been supported by the Secretary General of the 46-nation Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC), Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada, who has called upon member states to take strong measures to ensure that this book is withdrawn from circulation by its publisher immediately and its copies destroyed and the blasphemous book and its author must be banned from entry into all Islamic countries'.

Perhaps it would be more salutory if the author is allowed to enter into Islamic jurisdiction and prosecuted under relevant law.

Penguin have so far tried to maintain masterly indifference, telling people writing to them that they 'don't recognise Salman Rushdie's novel in your description', that it has 'been widely praised by critics' and that 'we have no intention of withdrawing the book.'

Surely they are counting on the legal security of the British law against blasphemy which applied only to Christianity. Probably

they are hoping that few Muslim authorities would have the will or courage to take on this powerful publishing house and PR network. Definitely they do not seem to be willing to think much of the deeply hurt feelings within the Muslim community.

The demands listed are neither unreasonable, nor unattainable. But it is time now for the Ummah to stand up for the honour and dignity of its Faith, of its Beloved Messenger of God (peace and blessings of God be upon him) and of his family and his companions (may God be pleased with them all). If they do not, then they should be prepared to receive more Rushdies and more Penguins.

We have never ever made an editorial appeal like this, but we are asking readers to pursue these demands both with the publishers and Muslim authorities through telegrams, letters, telephone, personal representation and through all civilised and legitimate means. But please leave Mr Salman Rushdie all to himself and to his charmed circle of 'literary critics'. We have to say this because we also sense a milling anger about the outrage committed by him.

The point Muslims want to make is that while they recognise that people behave according to their level of culture, they do not accept that it is right for anyone to publish and spread obscene sacrilege and make a business out of it.

Penguin cannot argue that they had not been advised. Their Indian editorial adviser Khushwant Singh, is on record having advised them against publishing the book. He had told them 'that the Prophet had been made to be small time impostor in the novel and that if the author could not see that the work would cause trouble he was out of touch with the Indian reality.' Khushwant is himself a distinguished writer. He is not a Muslim, much less a 'fundamentalist'. His advice was, however, over-ruled by a Rushdie friend in Penguin, Peter Mayer.

After Penguin have made amends with the Muslim world, they may also have to do a little house-cleaning . . . , but that's their business.

Source: Impact International, 18/20, 28th October-10th November 1988, pp. 12-14.

## Dear Mr Rushdie . . .

I have read with interest your open letter to our Prime Minister Mr Rajiv Gandhi, in which you have pleaded for a review of the ban of your book *The Satanic Verses*.

You have made fun of the fact that the order was issued by the finance ministry. Well, you information is half-baked. It was reported in the press that the decision was taken by the entire Cabinet; but as the ban is to be executed by the Customs, which falls under the finance ministry, no other ministry could have issued it.

This aside, it is for Rajiv Gandhi to reply to your letter: he may ignore it as most heads of government do.

I am not one of those, who has not read your book. I have, and am interested to know from you the replies to some questions, as I feel they may help me to understand you better and also for you to plead your case more effectively. We, in India, are ever so worned about communal violence, which erupts on the slightest pretext, we cannot allow a writer, whatever be his motive, to provoke it.

You say in your letter to Mr Gandhi that you 'strongly deny' that your book is 'a direct attack on Islam'. Further, that 'the section of the book in question . . . . deals with a prophet who is not called Muhammad'.

I have read your book. Like you, I have also been a student of Islam. Your statements, therefore, surprise me. I feel you are going back on your own objective just to get the ban lifted. Maybe I am wrong. I will, therefore, appreciate if you would clarify your position by replying openly to the following questions:

1 What is the significance of the title of your book *The Satanic Verses*? Has it not some historical connection? Do not the verses which refer to the three goddesses, condemned as Satanic and repudiated by Allah, the same as your reference to them in your novel? Your words are so clear that no other inference seems possible: "These verses are banished from the true recitation, *al-qur'an*. New verses are thundered in their place." . . .

- <sup>2</sup> Is Jahilia not the same word as used in Muslim annals for "the era of ignorance" Jahilia means ignorance the era before the advent of Islam? Your description is so apt: "The city of Jahilia is built entirely of sand, its structures formed of the desert whence it rises. It is a sight to wonder at . . .
- 3 Whom had you in mind when you delineated the character of Mahound? Do your descriptions of his various activities not fit those of the Prophet Muhammad? I can quote passage after passage to show the coincidence, but it will be too lengthy; moreover most of them are so offensive that I shudder to reproduce them.
- 4 From where have you drawn the names of the three goddesses: Lat, Uzza and Manat? They are certainly not the products of your imagination? No one reading about them in you book can think otherwise.
- 5 Is Hamza not the same as Prophet Muhammad's uncle of the same name? And are his encounters with Hind, as depicted by you, not representative of what happened in the early annals of Islam?
- 6 Is Abu Simbel in your novel not a reflection of Abu Sufiyan, the inveterate enemy of the Prophet? And Hind, whom you characterise so graphically, not his wife?
- 7 Is Salman your namesake called Persian in your book, not the same as Salman Farsi, a companion of the Prophet?
- Is Bilal not the first Muezzin of Islam, whom you describe as "the slave Bilal, the one Mahound freed, an enormous black monster, this one, with voice to match his voice"?
- 9 Is Zamzam, referred to in your novel, not the well held sacred by Muslims? Here is your description: "The city's water comes from underground streams and springs . . . next to the House of the Black Stone."
- Does the description of the "Black Stone" in your novel not fit that of Ka'aba? Here are your words: "The graves of Ismail and his mother Hagar the Egyptian lie by the northwest face of the House of the Black Stone, in an enclosure surrounded by a low wall."

These are some of the coincidences; there are many others. You, unlike most authors, have not mentioned that the characters in your novels do not bear any resemblance to persons living or dead. Can you, with your hand on your heart, say that they really don't resemble the characters and situations in the life of the Prophet of Islam. And if they do, what should the authorities do to control a likely occurrence which you as well as I know may disturb the tranquillity of the land.

I have not referred to your section on Ayesha; I found it rather confusing, where you have cleverly mixed fact with fiction. This does not apply, I feel, to your section on Mahound, which represents, to use your own words "the result of five years of work on Islam which has been central to my life". Apart from the Muslim politicians, whom you mention in your open letter to Mr Gandhi, you will be surprised that some of our best intellectuals - both writers and poets - have come out against you: they are JP Dixit. Nissim Ezekiel, Jean Kalgutkar, Vrinda Nabar, Vaskar Nandy, V Raman and Ashim Roy. In a letter to The Indian Post they refer to your statement that you knew Islam best and that was why you had talked about it and observed: 'How does he "talk" about this religion? Its founder is named Mahound. Rushdie has not invented this name. This was the name given to the Prophet Mahomed by his European detractors as a term of abuse ('Ma' from 'Mahomet' added to 'hound') and used frequently in various European eschatologies as a creature belonging to the lowest depths of Hell, as the Devil himself.'

After analysing your treatment further, they summarise your approach thus:

How has Rushdie treated the other pillars of Islamic faith? Ayesha, the youngest wife of the Prophet and the one who is regarded as one of the highest authorities of the Traditions is shown as "clad only in butterflies, leading an entire village, lemming-like into the Arabian Sea". The Ka'aba, regarded by the Muslims as the only consecrated spot on earth, is treated no better. Disguised as the "Tent of Black Stone called The Curtain", it has twelve prostitutes with names of the twelve wives of Mahound to add "the tempting spices of profanity". These "tempting spices" were apparently necessary to increase the number of pilgrims. Then what else remains of the basic core of the Islamic faith? The prophet is the Devil, the law-givers are

gexual perverts, and the Ka'aba and the Haj examples of depravity and greed. The Koran is of course only a collection of satanic verses.

The signatories conclude:

We, the undersigned, are all non-Muslims. We are, therefore, obviously not subscribers to the Islamic faith. We believe that any critique of that faith has to be restrained, reasoned and full of the spirit of respecting diverse cultures and faiths. India's unity and harmony demands it. It is for such harmony and unity that we demand that the ban on this book be not lifted.'

What have you to say, Mr Rushdie, to these friends who are no friends of Mr Rajiv Gandhi and are known upholders of

freedom of expression?

Lastly, as one born to Muslim parents and brought up, I think, under Islamic traditions, may I ask you whether you honestly believe that your book will not upset Muslims. Mr Khushwant Singh, who holds you in high esteem, advised your publisher, Penguin, against its publication as he felt that it would injure the religious feelings of Muslims and may disturb the law and order situation. Mr Zamir Ansari, Penguins's representative in India, confirmed this to me though he said a confidential advice sought by Penguin should not have been publicised by Mr Singh. But that is another matter. The fact remains that Mr Singh is no friend of the Government of India – in fact he is one of its most bitter critics – and his opinion has been unequivocal. So is that of Mr M V Kamath, an eminent journalist, who never finds anything right with Mr Rajiv Gandhi. He said that Mr Rushdie's book is full of despicable ideas'. If Nehru was alive he would have banned if

lask you in the same manner as you have asked Mr Gandhi, our prime minister, whether you consider this ban as really uncalled for, in view of the danger that many persons in public life feel it poses to communal harmony and peace in India. Is democracy a licence to do or undo anything by anyone or everyone?

Some idealists in the past might have dreamt of it; but is it really practical?

May I also remind you that it was Lord Macaulay who incorporated the need for such a ban in our legal system to prevent disorder; it is not Mr Rajiv Gandhi's invention. Mr Soli Sorabjee,

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whose legal eminence is undisputed, has argued against the ban, but he is a poor judge of public reaction. That is why, like his mentor Mr Nani Palkhivala, he wanted to be in politics but gave up the idea. *The Times of India*, in its editorial, has answered both you and him effectively:

'No, dear Rushdie, we do not wish to build a repressive India. On the contrary we are trying our best to build a liberal India where we can all breathe freely. But in order to build such an India, we have to preserve the India that exists. That may not be a pretty India. But this is the only India we possess.'

Do not pontificate, Mr Rushdie; be logical and face the facts. Answer your critics if you can.

Yours truly,

Rafiq Zakaria

The Illustrated Weekly of India (Bombay), 23rd-29th October, 1988.

Yes, Mr Rushdie, We Shall Not Permit Literary Colonialism, Nor Religious Pornography

## by Syed Shahabuddin

... Yes, Mr Rushdie, we are a religious people and we do not like our religious personalities to be abused and vilified, directly or indirectly. Call us primitive, call us fundamentalists, call us superstitious barbarians, call us what you like, but your book only serves to define what has gone wrong with the Western civilisation – it has lost all sense of distinction between the sacred and the profane.

Life is not all you live and what you can purchase with your royalty paid by a fatigued culture in exchange for your performance as a master of literary gimmicks and as a provider of cultural shock. It is something deeper. You have lost your sense of the super-natural. We have not. Why should you presume we have?

Civilisation is nothing but voluntary acceptance of restraints. You may hold whatever private opinion you like but you do not enjoy an absolute right to express them in public. As for a serious intellectual discussion, there is always a time a place. But a logical argument cannot be on the basis of a piece of historical fiction.

In any case, you cannot claim to be the repository of absolute truths. Rest assured, Rushdies will come and go but the names of Muhammad, Christ or Buddha will last till the end of time. And soon your Satanic Verses will be laid aside, having served its literary purpose of generating excitement and forgotten, even by your champions (many of whom have not, I believe, seen or read it). But the Qur'an, the Bible and the Gita shall continue to be read by millions and not only read but revered and acted

You are aggrieved that some of us have condemned you without a hearing and asked for the ban without reading your book. Yes, I have not read it, nor do I intend to. I do not have to wade through a filthy drain to know what filth is. My first inadvertent step would tell me what I have stepped into. For the synopsis, the review, the excerpts, the opinions of those gloatings were enough. Rushdie, 'the Islamic scholar, the man who studied Islam at the university' has to brag about his Islamic credentials, so that he can convincingly vend his Islamic wares in the West, which has not yet laid the ghost of the crusades to rest, but given it a new cultural trapping which explains why writers like you are so wanted and pampered.

Is any more evidence required in the face of your frank admission: 'I have talked about the Islamic religion subjects which are off limits and that includes God, includes prophets?' That is what you have said. The very title of your book is suggestively derogatory. In the eyes of the believer the Qur'an is the Word of God, and you plead innocence of the possible Muslim reaction. You depict the Prophet whose name the practising Muslim recites five times a day, whom he loves, whom he considers the model formankind, as an impostor, and you expect us to applaud you?

You have had the nerve to situate the wives of the Prophet, whom we Muslims regard as the mothers of the community, in a brothel and you expect the Muslims to praise your power of imagination? You cannot take shelter behind the plea that after all it is a dream sequence in a piece of fiction. But tell us what

compulsion you had to name the Prophet of your novel as Mahound (you are really too clever by half, not just naughty). Anyone conversant with the English language knows that Mahound is an archaic form for Mohammad, the name of the Prophet.

No, your act is not unintentional or a careless slip of the pen. It was deliberate and consciously planned with devilish forethought, with an eye to your market. Here in India, our laws are very clear. Though ignorance of law is no excuse, let me instruct you so that you are more careful if you wish to sell in India. Article 295 A of the Indian Penal Code says: "Whoever, with deliberate and malicious intention of outraging the religious feelings of any class of citizens of India, by words either spoken or written or otherwise, insults or attempts to insult the religion or the religious beliefs of that class, shall be punished with imprisonment – or with fine – or with both. I wish you were in India, Mr Rushdie, to face the music. And then there are other sections like 153 A, 153 B, 292, 293, 295 and 298 of the same Code which may be cited against you.

This is the legal system of a civilised society. We respect each other's religious beliefs. We do not intentionally outrage the religious feelings of others or insult their religion or ridicule the personalities to whom we are emotionally attached or mock our religious susceptibility. I would like to request the liberals on your side - the knights of freedom arrayed behind you in their shining armour - to launch a crusade to have the laws repealed before rushing to defend you, including the Customs Act under which our government banned the entry of your obnoxious product.

And take my word for it, Article 19 of the Constitution of India cannot come to your rescue either, because 'freedom of speech and expression' is subject to 'reasonable restriction' in the interest of inter alia, 'public order, decency or morality or in relation to defamation or incitement to an offence.' Incidentally, only citizens and not aliens can invoke Article 19. In any case, freedom to create is not the licence to abuse.

To sum up, your 'magnum opus' is objectionable on three grounds: It is a crime against human decency; it is an insult to Islam; it is an offence under the Indian law.

And tell your British champions and advisors that India shall not permit 'literary colonialism' nor what may be called religious

parmography. Not even in the name of freedom and democracy, not even under the deafening and superb orchestration of your

And also tell them not to have sleepless nights over our image abroad. Our image is not so fragile as not to survive this ban nor founded on the acceptance of the mores of your permissive society, but on what we can do as a nation to give a better life, a life of dignity to our people and how we can live with each other in peace, mutual respect and harmony.

Coulce: Impact International, 18/21, 11th-24th November 1988, pp. 17-18.

## UK Muslims Act Against Infamous Book

Dr. M.M. Ahsan's Interview in the Saudi Gazette

Jeddah, Wed.

One of the Muslim world's leading institutions has appealed to the Ummah to black-list Penguin and its subsidiary Viking, the publisher of Salman Rushdie's sacrilegious book Satanic Verses.

Dr M. Manazir Ahsan, the Director General of the Leicester-based Islamic Foundation, told the *Gazette* that a decisive action by Saudi Arabia for banning all books of the two publishers will be in line with the resolution of OIC's Information Ministers meeting held recently in Jeddah.

Dr Ahsan arrived in Jeddah on Monday to perform Umra and pray at the Prophet's Mosque in Madina, and also to brief the Kingdom's Islamic bodies about the action being taken against the publishers. He would call on the Muslim World League's Secretary General Dr Abdullah Omar Nasseef and also others to apprise them of the success achieved in that respect.

The Islamic Foundation was the first to notice the blasphemous chapter of the filthy book and India and South Africa were the first countries to ban the book, Dr Ahsan said.

Soon after its publication the Foundation in co-operation with the UK's other Islamic bodies formed an action committee to

The Muslim Argument

proceed against the book and the publishers. The immediate action was to contact the executive chief of Penguin, who, Dr Ahsan said, refused to talk with the action committee.

Both the Penguin and Viking took the plea that the infamous book was favourably reviewed in the UK and nominated for award and found no reason to withdraw it or apologise for its publication.

The publishers' attitude demonstrated that they simply wanted the case to be dismissed outright, Dr Ahsan said. "Not only did the efforts to meet Penguin's chief fail, but he even did not like to talk to us on phone and answer letters from the UK's Islamic missions," he added. A signature campaign to move the publishers was initiated and over 60,000 signatures were obtained from all over the Kingdom, which testified to the Muslims' demand that the book be immediately withdrawn, the misguided author and the publishers make a public apology, and the two should pay damages to a Muslim charity for causing offence and distress to the Muslim Ummah. Even this demonstration of protest did not work on the publishers, Dr Ahsan said.

As developments later revealed the publishers were reported to be only sorry if the publication of the book had caused any offence to Muslims but were not prepared for a public apology and withdrawing the book from the market, Dr Ahsan said.

Dr Ahsan disclosed that Rushdie went into hiding and house-arrested by his own conscience at a place with changed phones and under a cover of security by men and dogs.

The book is scheduled for publication and marketing in the US by February 1989. But the Islamic Foundation in collaboration with other Islamic agencies there is already preoccupied with a campaign not to let the book in.

The infamous book, Dr Ahsan disclosed, was marked to India's noted writer and journalist Khushwant Singh for pre-publication comments and he promptly recommended to the publishers not to print such a baseless book. Singh's comments as referee on South East Asian subjects were not heeded by the publishers, who later sent the manuscript to a Jewish referee who favoured the publication, all to cause fury and anger among the world's Muslims.

London-based Muslim ambassadors have formed a threemember committee, comprising those of Kuwait, Pakistan and Somalia, to look into the legal aspects of the case and make representation with the governments of the UK and EEC coun-

Source: The Saudi Gazette (Jeddah), 15th December, 1988.

## Carry on Salman Rushdie

The ugly saga of Viking-Penguin's 'Satanic Verses' continues to roll on. Much to the delight of its publishers and their literary and not so literary connoisseurs of this 'rich novel' and to equal bewilderment on the part of the Muslim community as to why some people can be so innocently callous in asserting their 'right' to insult and injure the sanctities of other people.

Last week the Muslim community in Britain was administered some gratuitous advice, part patronising, part intimidating by the British media, both the national and the sensation-seeking tabloid press. Apparently, they had been switched on by the weekend's demonstration by Muslims in Bradford and the reported decision by the W.H. Smith book stores to withdraw the *The Satanic Verses* from its shelves in view of receding sales and growing protest by Muslims up and down the country. Like in other Midland and West Yorkshire towns, Muslims in Bradford had been expressing their anguish at the continued refusal of the publisher to withdraw this filthy and sacrilegious title and tender unqualified apology to the community for this gross insult to its religious sanctities and asatoken of their disgust they had also burnt a copy of the book.

The Independent' (16th January) wrote a first editorial entitled, Dangers of a Muslim campaign'. This was followed by a lead article in the Evening Standard, and everyone joined in next morning - The Times, The Sun, The Daily Mail and The Daily Telegraph. The Guardian (18th January) followed suit inevitably, but instead of writing a leader, it asked W. L. Webb to do a 'Judgment on Salman'.

The Independent mixed its counsel with words of praise for the Muslim Community. Itsaid: 'The Muslim minority has contributed much to the nation's commerce and entrepreneurial spirit. Its members have been notably law-abiding, and their devotion to family values, hard work and personal integrity are rightly

admired'. It seemed to accept that 'It is important that their spiritual values should be respected and that they should be spared (sic) from racial discrimination in all its forms'.

But what should Muslims do if a publisher or publication commits filthy sacrilege against their basic religious sanctities and insists on continuing to do so?

They may feel sad and anguished. They may cry out in protest and helplessness. However, *The Independent* was certain that the book could not be 'overtly blasphemous'.

'It is hardly likely', it argued 'that a worthy and liberal-minded literati who sat on the panels awarding these prizes (sic) would have thought so highly of a book which was 'overtly blasphemous', even of another faith' and 'The Satanic Verses was written as a moral parable, and that is how they interpreted it'. So Muslims should accept Penguin's 'moral parable' on the authority of the 'literati' and the 'hardly likely' probability of their agreeing to award a prize to any 'overtly blasphemous' work. If they demur and they don't, then 'their leaders should examine the implications of their war against the Rushdie novel' because they 'must not seek to impose their values either on their fellow Britons of other faiths or on the majority who acknowledge no faith at all'.

Although Muslims are seeking to *impose* nothing on nobody, thinly veiled hints are dropped about the implications of their alleged attempt 'to impose their values . . . on the majority'. They are also asked to ponder over a couple of related questions.

Do Muslim leaders 'really feel this book poses a serious threat to their followers?'

'Is their campaign not doubly counter-productive, first in giving the book much publicity, and second, in reminding Britons of the intolerant face which Islam has all too often shown abroad?' And 'It may indeed be thought that Muslims are furnishing material for further moral parables about Islam by attacking Rushdie's fictional creation... Their crusade not just against the book but against Rushdie personally does them no credit'. In fact the editorial had started off with attributing another 'discredit' to Bradford Muslims that in burning 'some copies of the book' they had followed 'the example of the Inquisition and Hitler's National Socialists'.

Sadly for the respectability of the newspaper, the whole editorial is based on unjustified assumptions and therefore con-

fused dialectics but it goes on to offer patronising counsels nevertheless. One doubts very much if the leader-writer had even scanned through the 'thick' novel because otherwise (s)he would not have based the whole 'danger' call on one single determinant: the 'hardly likely' fallibility of the *literati*. No need was felt to be precise even about such a small fact as the number of books burnt in Bradford (not 'some', just 'one') yet the jibe of Muslims acting like 'Hiller's National Socialists' is so carelessly hurled at them, for the sake of effect no doubt, but in the style of the tabloid press.

However, Muslims are not at all concerned about 'Rushdie personally', nor about any increase in the sale of the book presumably because some people might rush to buy it when they hear that it blasphemes Islam. If they do, they are sure to regret throwing away £12.95 when they discover that they now belong to 'The Page 15 Club... of literary editors, journalists, academics, novelists who have got no further than page 15 with Rushdie's books'.

The Muslims cannot also be deterred from exercising their Fundamental Right to reject insult to their religious sanctities for the fear that some Britons may feel reminded 'of the intolerant face which Islam has all too often shown abroad' or that by doing so they will be 'furnishing material for further moral parables about Islam'. Their objective is simple: that is to make known their sense of outrage and to reject insult with all the moral force at their command.

The Islamic assumption about human nature is based on its imate goodness, its rejection of filth and profanity and its respect for other people's religious sanctities and accordingly the 'Muslim campaign' has received support from across all faith and non-faith communities. So the efforts of the publicists notwithstanding, Muslims have no negative views about the vast majority of Britons and they do not believe that there would be many Britons who derived any pleasure or satisfaction if someone blasphemed Islam, overtly or covertly. As for the tiny tribe of 'parable writers', they did not need any reminder because it already possessed sufficient material about 'the intolerant face of Islam . . . abroad'.

The Independent does not, however, say what Muslims can do if a tiny minority of blinkered literati seeks 'to impose' its 'values' on them though it admits that 'the Islamic campaign would be more understandable if Rushdie's novel were in any way trashy',

but as the *literati* have decreed its literary merit, no one can date to admit the possibility that it could still be 'trashy'.

The Daily Telegraph which had only until recently so vehemently backed the official campaign to keep The Spycatcher away from these shores was now proclaiming the 'Right to be read'. It believed that should Muslims choose to burn a copy of the book 'in the privacy of their homes [so burning a book was not by itself objectionable, it only mattered where it was burned] . . . Many Christians who have struggled with Mr Rushdie's impenetrable novels will warm their hands at the fireside' and even agreed that 'We may not be able to follow all that Mr Rushdie writes', yet the newspaper was concerned about defending 'absolutely his right to be read'. It was not at all bothered about the contents of the book, literary or trashy, blasphemous or scholarly, thick or readable. Its sole concern seemed to be to defend the interests of the publisher and bookseller.

A warning to the Muslim community was therefore considered to be in order, albeit prefaced by taking note of 'the hard work and enterprising spirit of the Moslem minority, their piety and devotion to family values'. Like The Independent which had also lavished similar praise, The Daily Telegraph too did not care to reflect on the main cause of this hard work, law-abidingness and devotion. If it did it would have been obvious to it that whatever moral and social values the Muslim community reflected was only because of its faith, its sense of dignity and appreciation of fundamental human values. It has reacted so clearly against sacrilege because it does not suffer from any crisis of values and it does not want to become a flotsam in any pool of relative values.

However, The Telegraph said 'the scenes in Bradford over the weekend presented an image of Moslem sentiment in Britain of the most unhelpful possible kind to race relations'. The 'Islamic religious leaders' were, therefore, told that they 'have two obligations' first to maintain a sense of proportion about any perceived threat to their religion posed by Mr Rushdie; and second, to recall that, as citizens or residents of this country, they have a responsibility to respect the British tradition of free speech and not react in the fashion of the ayatollahs.

Presumably it has not been able to go through Mr Rushdie's 'impenetrable' novel, nor does it seem to have cared to find out why Muslims have felt so 'atypically' offended, yet *The Telegraph* 

chooses to tell Muslims of their 'obligations'. There are no 'ayatollahs' here among Muslims in Britain, nor do they intend to produce them in the future, but it was a little out of character for a Tory newspaper to propound the otherwise 'subversive' doctrine of unfettered 'free speech'. Muslims are exercising their freedom only to express their feelings of disgust that some people should be abusing freedom of expression in order to blaspheme their sanctities and were insistent on doing so.

Like both The Independent and The Daily Telegraph, The Times as well has tried to make a big fuss about the incident of the token burning of a copy of The Satanic Verses in Bradford and used it to judge on 'Islamic intolerance'. Naturally it goes on to offer some lessons in British democracy to 'the newcomers in Britain'.

The Muslim community has been asking the publisher to withdraw and pulp the book . . . because that way instead of polluting the atmosphere by burning the book, it would be possible to recycle the paper and to put it to better use. So despite the isolated case of Bradford burning the book was really a non-issue, but it would be interesting to find out how many similar editorials our national dailies have been written over political demonstrations burning documents or national flags as a token of democratic expression of some protest or disapproval. Though Muslims should better try not to imitate the practice uncritically, the fact remains that such kind of protests are very much a part of the 'free world' democratic culture.

However, while unlike the two other dailies *The Times* admits that many of the allegorical references in the book are 'derogatory' to Muhammad (peace be upon him), 'to his family and to the foundation of Islam', yet it tells them to do nothing except 'neither buy nor read the novel'. Why?

One, anything otherwise would amount to 'intolerance'.

Two, it would not be 'in the interest of community harmony'.

And three, 'Britain is a democracy in which Parliament elected

by the majority, makes law applicable to all'.

The argument amounts to saying that Muslims should quietly put up with sacrilege and insult, for to do otherwise would be construed as 'intolerance', affecting, 'community harmony' that a law having been made by a 'Parliament elected by majority' and applicable to all' there should be no call for its amendment or improvement if it was found to be wanting in any respect.

# Why Selectively Defend the Freedom of Expression?

Those who are screaming foul at the top of their voices on Salman Rushdie's plight did not raise even a finger in protest on scores of other violations of freedom of expression. Here are a few items recently in the news.

- Mr. Englestad of Nevada was fined \$1.5 million because he held two birthday parties of Hitler in 1986 and 1988 in a secret room of the casino and hotel he owns. (New York Times, April 3, 1989).
- April 1989 issue of *Playboy* appeared on newsstands in England with two pages torn out (containing Gerry Adam M.P.'s interview, the leader of the Sinn Fein Party, the political wing of IRA).
- Naom Chomsky's Fateful Triangle was banned in Canada for quite some time and so was M.A. Hoffman's The Great Holocaust Trial.
- In March 1989 Denise de Kalafa, a Brazilian pop singer, was banned from performing at the Cuban-American Festival as she went to Cuba in 1981.
- A southern California radio broadcaster, Tom Leykis, used asteamroller to crush a stack of Cat Stevens records to protest the pop singer's support of Khomeini edict.
- Switzerland's biggest media consultant, the Ringier, fired Huber, a well-known Swiss journalist for supporting the action against Rushdie.
- A Napa County judge halted a weekend concert of Neo-Nazi bands from around the country in March 1989.
- A Holocaust survivor's Hebrew translation of Mein Kampf
  has touched off a heated debate in Israel and no publisher
  is willing to take the heat.
- When Kissinger urged Israel to ban T.V. reporters from Gaza and the Occupied territories in March 1988, no editorial appeared condemning the absolute outrage.

The British law happens to be silent on the question of blasphemy against non-Anglican faiths and is in evident need of amendment in that respect as Lord Scarman and others have said in their minority report on Offences against Religion and Public Worship. However, until that happens it would be naive to assume that the spirit of the law as it stood now was to condone blasphemy against Judaism, Hinduism, Islam and other faiths and it would be wrong to demand or expect that people should not express their disapproval of blasphemy nor seek an amendment of the law because doing so would be undemocratic and impair community harmony. It is a very poor view of the community and definitely not true that non-Muslims would be pleased if someone blasphemed Islam and would be angry if Muslims said they protested against it.

The Guardian's 'Judgement of Salman' by W. L. Webb is, however, quite frank because 'For the first time, a very intelligent novelist with a sophisticated and intelligent audience all over the world has brought to bear on Islam, its culture and its history, all subtly and powerfully expressive techniques of modernism.' He is pleased that 'The real struggle will be in that (i.e. Islamic) culture and that the brunt of it would be born (sic) by its own writers and intellectuals' but he would like to see how 'a no longer very brave or liberal (British) culture responds to the local manifestations of the struggle'. Webb's own sympathies are clear and categorical. The Muslim response, however, reminds him of Stalinism, receding from one land and surfacing in 'another militant ideology'.

What is so plain and obvious is that Muslims, 'being newcomers to Britain', have to go a long way before they will be able to win respect for their dignity and their religious sanctities and it would largely depend on their own positive and unilateral attitude towards the good of the society, no matter the distractions caused by the so-called 'parable writers', literati or other ethno-centric elements on the social fringe. However, for now the only point Muslims are trying to make is that it is not civilised to insult religious sanctities of any people irrespective of whether it was done in a literary style or a trashy style and that insult only diminishes the insulter. There is no threat to Islam for Islam is protected by God Almighty.

Source: Impact International, 19/2, 27th January-9th February 1989, pp. 7-8.

Source: ICNA Booklet, p. 6

## Canadian Muslims on Satanic Verses

by Qasim Syed

In Canada we have great respect for the freedom of expression. So when one group of people wants the book Satanic Verses withdrawn by its publisher (Penguin) we feel that this group wants to violate the freedom of expression, and we ought to stand for freedom of expression even though we may not agree with the material in the book. This is a natural reaction and is expected of all freedom loving people. However, every inquiring mind would ask that why in the world this group, also living in Canada, wants this book withdrawn. Recent media coverage does not provide a satisfactory answer to this question. Therefore, in this article a sincere attempt has been made to approach this issue in a systematic and logical fashion in a question answer format.

- Q. Is Islam an intolerant religion which cannot stand any criticism?
- A. Islam is neither an intolerant religion nor afraid of any criticism. Islam in fact is such a peace loving religion that one of the meanings of the word Islam is peace itself. Day in and day out anti-Islamic material is produced. Muslims do not take to the streets and say that this material or that material be withdrawn. So tolerant, reasonable and peaceful are the Islamic principles that, despite all the bad publicity, Islam is earning adherents right in the west.

#### The Muslim Argument

O. Then why Muslims cannot tolerate Satanic Verses?

A. This book is not based on any civilized criticism of Islam. This sacrilege is based on fabrication, slander, and extreme insult loward Prophet Mohammad, his family and other Islamic pergenalities, and pristine principles of Islam. And in turn it insults one billion Muslims of the world...

Q. But this a work of fiction, some names have been distorted or changed and the events occur in a sequence of a dream. What is the comment on that?

A. Everybody would agree that fiction and fantasy are no license for insult, slander and profanity. Anybody can dream or fantasize as he pleases but insulting others is the no go region.

0. Did the publisher Penguin have any knowledge about the multing nature of the book before its publication?

A. Yes, their own Indian editorial advisor Khushwant Singh (not a Muslim) advised them not to publish the book. He told them. "The Prophet had been made to be a small time impostor in the novel and that if the author could not see that the work would cause trouble he was out of touch with the Indian reality."

Q. But what about an author's right to freedom of expression?

A All environmentally conscious people resist abuse of the environment. All energy conscious people oppose abuse of energy. Similarly, all freedom loving people should stand against abuse of freedom of expression. Freedom of expression should not violate the right of one billion people to religious dignity. Even in Canada freedom of expression has not been absolute. Keegstra and Zundel cases have been recent example of that...

Q. Does Islam believe in freedom of expression?

A. Yes. In fact, Islam has a complete system of basic human rights (for example, rights to: live, equality, personal liberty, religious freedom, economic protection, freedom from religious distress, justice, etc.). And the history of these human rights does not start with the Magna Carta or U.N.O.'s treaties and covenants. These rights were given fourteen centuries ago. According to lam, freedom of expression is not only a right but exercising it for the good of mankind is a duty incumbent on all believers.

Furthermore, Islam accords all religions and their followers freedom of religious dignity and the right of protection from religious distress. Qur'an commands, "Do not revile the deflict which they invoke beside Allah" (6:108). That means to talk about various religions with reasons and criticizing them with respect or disagreeing with them is a part of freedom of expression. But ridiculing any religion for the purpose of insult is denial of the right to protection from religious distress and religious dignity.

Q. Has the author inflicted insult on somebody else before?

A. Yes. Regarding his novel Midnight Children both the author and his publisher had to give public apology to the late Prime Minister of India, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, in answer to her libel action. They also paid costs and gave an undertaking to remove from all future editions under their control the passages objected to by her. The author had suggested that Mrs. Gandhi was responsible for the death of her husband through neglect.

Q. Wouldn't withdrawal of the book make other authors and writers feel insecure?

A. No. All sensible authors and writers do not use insulting abusive, and obscene language toward religions of the world and their revered figures. The issue is not the freedom of expression. The issue is the right to religious dignity. In fact authors and writers should be the first to denounce this book because it is a scar on their profession. Disciplinary action against abusers exists in all professions. And this does not weaken the profession but strengthens it.

Q. If the book is not withdrawn would it enhance the credibility of western freedom of expression around the world?

A. No. In fact it would be a set back for the credibility, at least in the eyes of one billion Muslims. It will imply that under the pretext freedom of expression the right to religious dignity of any minority can be violated in the West any time.

Q. Is the demand that the publisher (Penguin) withdraw the book made only by a small number of Muslims?

A. No. All Muslims around the world want this book withdrawn. The Secretary General of the 46-nation Organization of

#### The Muslim Argument

the Islamic Conference (OIC), Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada supported this demand. Muslims need help from all Canadians in this peaceful campaign.

Islamic Circle of North America.

List of the Books

Banned

in

**CANADA** 

List of Books Banned in Canada

- 1) The Battle of Truth
- 2) Controversy of Zion
- 3) Hoax of the 20th Century
- 4) Know Your Enemies
- 5) The Real Holocaust
- 6) Rulers of Russia
- 7) Secret Societies and Suppressive Movements
- 8) The Talmud Unmasked
- 9) The Ultimate World Order
- 10) World Revolution
- 11) Zionist Factor

There were reasons to ban these books and we want to know:

- What about freedom of the press?
- What about freedom of speech?
- Where was the writers association at that time?

We invite the attention of all the people with no prejudice and ask them:

- Why now there is such an uproar on our demand of banning the book "Satanic Verses" which is another example of hate

material, racism and distortion of real history and slander in the 1st degree?

- Why, all of a sudden, are we blamed to be against the freedom of speech and freedom of the press?
- Why now is the Canadian Government, especially the Prime Minister, saying that the board of a few people should not decide what Canadians should read and should not read (Statement of Prime Minister in London, England, visit March 1989)
- Why the elected leaders are not concerned for one specific group . . .

#### We want to see:

- Canadian Government take a lead in all matters of truth, fairness and justice.
- Canadian Government to be honest and sincere to its people within Canada in particular and everybody in the world in general.
- Canadian Government give priority to decent moral values over unnecessary and meaningless cooperation with indecents

We are outraged, we are hurt and we are ignored. We feel that

- You can help us in knowing the truth.
- You can help us in joining the truth.
- You can help in making this beautiful country even a better place to live.

#### We are determined to:

- Continue our protest until, our demands are met.
- Stand firm on our objectives.
- Solve our problems through democratic and peaceful process.
- Convey and propagate the message of truth through our patience and we will get through to the Political Leaders.

## The Muslim Argument

All We Want Now:

- The book "Satanic Verses", the insult to common intellect, he banned in Canada, the book which is based on racism, nofanity, slander and distortion of real history.
- An unqualified apology from the Writer, the Publisher and the Distributor.
- No publication in any other language.

Is it . . .

"UNFAIR"

to ask for . . .

"FAIRNESS"

You let us Know

Islamic Circle of North America.

The American Muslims on "The Satanic Verses"

Islamic Circle of North America

Words have power and therefore they have to be used carefully. Words can wound and they can heal. It is naive to say that freedom to use words of hate and destruction can be unlimited. No civilized society allows this. That is why Penguin, or any other mainstream publisher does not publish Ku Klux Klan or the neo Nazi literature.

We Muslims believe that it is highly imprudent and inconsiderate for an individual to completely ignore the religious sensitivities of his fellow citizens while exercising his first amendment rights.

Rights of individuals are undoubtedly guaranteed by the state but it is the spirit of harmony, goodwill, and mutual respect among the members of society that ensures the full enjoyment of these rights by all.

The recent media attention to Mr. Rushdie's book, The Salanik Verses and worldwide condemnation of the book by Muslims have given rise to talks on such issues as freedom of expression, decency, and intolerance. We feel truth and honesty have been the real casualties in the nightly drama of the evening news. We draw attention to these facts here so that you may also hear Muslim side of the debate and form your own opinion.

#### What is in the "The Satanic Verses"

Nearly everyone agrees on one thing about the book; it contains offensive material. But to say this is to put it very mildly. The facts are much harsher. Let's have a brief review of the book:

- a) Blasphemous: Six out of nine chapters deal with Islamic theme, Islamic symbolism and with real Islamic characters. The whole chapter two is about the life and mission of last Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (peace be upon him). Prophet Muhammad is depicted as "Mahound" which means devil. Great companions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) were described as "those goons" and "those F--- clowns" (page 101) and they also were called "bum" and "scum," (page 101). Wives of Prophet were called "whores" (page 381) and Islamic rituals and terminologies were ridiculed (page 104, 381 and others). The sanctity of Muslims' Holy book the Qur'an was damaged (pages 363 & 364).
- b) Racist: The book contains many racist remarks. For example, one of Prophet Muhammad's companions from Africa was painted as "an enormous black monster" (page 101). There were many negative remarks about Malcolm X, who was Muslim leader of the U.S. (page 413).
- c) Anti-Semitic: Abraham (peace be upon him), the great Prophet, common to Judaism, Christianity and Islam was called "the bastard" (p. 95).

(May Allah forgive us even in quoting these offensive excerpts).

No. Mr. Rushdie's case is not all "intellectual," nor are the Muslims trying to counter his "scholarship" with "a box of matches." Thousands of "intellectual" works which take a less than favorable view of Islam are being published all over the wold. We Muslims do not throw such works into the incinerator. We buy them for our libraries and universities and often invite their authors to give a lecture or seminar on their "studies".

Islamic civilization and Muslims cherish scholarship whether it favors them religiously or not. But *The Satanic Verses* does not include itself in the intellectual criticism of Islam, it scandalizes and maliens.

## The Rushdie Tradition of Getting Attention

Slander and libel are nothing new to Mr. Rushdie. In a previous novel, Midnight's Children, he tried his hand at the late Indian prime minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi. She had to be given a public apology by both the author and the publishers in answer to her libel action. They also paid costs and gave an undertaking to remove from all future editions the passages objected to by her.

In The Satanic Verses, Rushdie is not libelling an individual, he insults and libels a whole community. It is obscene. It has self-hating racist undertones. And it incites racial as well as religious passions against the Muslim community.

## Arrogance or the Commercial Interests of Penguin

Penguin's own Editorial Advisor, Khushwant Singh, an eminent writer (not a Muslim) had told the Penguin, "The Prophet had been made to be small time impostor in the novel." He strongly advised against the publication of the book.

Once the book was published in England, it was strongly criticized by Muslims and non-Muslims alike. It failed to win the Booker's award. In the British parliament the number of members backing a motion condemning the Rushdie book swelled to 33.

For the last four months, tens of thousands of Muslims from all over the U.S. and Canada wrote and called to the Penguin/Viking requesting that the book be withdrawn from Britain, and not be published in the U.S. Muslim leaders made every effort to arrange a meeting with the publisher so that this potentially

explosive situation be defused before it reached crisis proportions.

But the publisher had declined even to receive a representative delegation of the Muslim community in the USA.

#### Are Muslims Intolerant?

The above points establish that Muslims in this country have politely sought to defuse the situation. Yet ironically, it is the Muslims who are now blamed for intolerance.

Yes, we are intolerant of hypocrisy and hate. If that is a crime, we admit to being guilty. Muslims are exercising their freedom only to express their feelings of disgust that some should abuse freedom of expression in order to blaspheme their sacred beliefs and were insistent on doing so. We have rights to protest.

Muslims in America are an eight million strong community. We are here to stay and prosper. A vast majority of us are taxpaying professionals, scientists and educators. We trust that Penguin would not publish any slanderous material condemning Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. because it will be against the sensitivities of the racial relations. Penguin should have exercised better judgment in selecting and printing a book which has offended one fifth of the human race, a billion Muslims.

It is not unusual in the Western democratic societies for the media and the publishing industry to exercise self restraint in the interest of social order as well as in consideration of moral and ethical norms and racial and religious sensitivities of the society. The Muslims would like the people in media and the publishing industry to extend to them the courtesy which had generally been extended to other ethnic, racial and religious groups threatened by stereo-typical portrayal, innuendoes and false characterization.

In raising their objections to *The Satanic Verses*, Muslims are only trying to underscore the difference between the sacred and the profane, and between liberty and license. We see it basically as a moral issue, one about decency and civilization across all religious or ethnic lines. It is not civilized to insult the sanctities of any people. And that is why Muslims were in the protest march against the movie "The Last Temptation of Christ."

Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA), New York.

## Muslims Are Not Arsonists: A Reply to Mr. Kenneth Baker

by M.H. Faruqi

The Rt Hon Mr Kenneth Baker, MP Secretary of State for Education and Science Elizabeth House York Road London SE1 7PH

#### Dear Mr Baker,

I must confess that my first reaction to your 'Argument before arson' (*The Times*, 30th January 1989) was of a momentary disbelief: disbelief over the by-line.

For the past three weeks, Muslims have been subjected to some quite rough and orchestrated belabouring by the media for no reason other than that they were expressing lawfully and legitimately their deep sense of outrage and hurt over the publication of *The Satanic Verses*. There has been absolutely little factual mention of their cause of concern. Large and peaceful demonstrations in several provincial towns have gone unreported by the national media. They were *censored*, in other words. Then came the Bradford demonstration and the symbolic burning of a copy of the book. Now Muslims became 'arsonists' (as *The Times'* heading of your article clearly suggests), enemies of freedom and followers of Hitler and Stalin.

Muslims were accused of trying 'to impose their values' on fellow Britons and warned that by seeking to do that they would injure 'community harmony'.

They were lectured on British democracy in which 'Parliament elected by the majority' made law 'applicable to all' – as if The Saunic Verses were to be treated by Muslims as sanctioned by law; as if the Muslim community was not represented in Parliament by the MPs 'elected by majority'; as if no law (e.g. the Blasphemy law) once enacted can be amended and improved!

Islam was per se 'intolerant', it was assumed, and Muslims were told that what they were objecting to as 'filthy sacrilege' was a

'moral parable' thought very highly of by 'a worthy and liberalminded *literati*' and the message was that by taking exception to this 'great work' of religion and literature, Muslims were showing their own lack of culture and inability to appreciate scholarship.

Muslims were warned that if they did not desist from pressing their objection, then they should be ready for other 'parable'

writers to swoop upon them.

In any case, it was argued, that even if the Muslim felt offended, the larger society had the 'right' to read Penguin's Verses and it was the duty of the media to uphold and defend that 'right'.

Muslims were in fact reminded that they were 'newcomers' and the clear message was that being 'newcomers', they must not think

of their Fundamental Human Rights.

This is an objective and unemotional abstract of the firm counsel administered by responsible sections of the media who had, it seems, assumed that Muslims were just vandals out to destroy culture, scholarship, freedom and social harmony. Now you too Mr Baker have more or less repeated the same things without checking your facts and relying entirely and uncritically on these very sources. You have assumed and presumed and come up with opinions and judgement which bear little relation to facts. However, your entry into the debate is to be welcomed, because at last there is a responsible level at which one can reason with. Unlike the newspapers who generally file your letters in the wastepaper basket, if you try to contradict notions and prejudices held dear by them, one can, at least, expect to be listened to.

So if you bear with me, I would like to go over your 'Argument

before arson'.

Sadly for the objectivity of what you have tried to conclude with - Heinrich Heine's supposedly 'prophetic' words that 'Whenever books are burned men also, in the end, are burned - you too seem to have been taken in by the media's over-exaggerated blow up of the isolated incident when someone chose to draw attention to his feelings to an otherwise insensitive and censorious media by, in our view, unnecessarily, burning his own hard-earned £12.95.

No-one had done it before, nor anyone else is going to adopt it as a standard method of demonstrating protest. Over 15,000 Muslims had marched in London 14 days after the Bradford 'arson' and two days before your article was written in order to

express their pain and agony. It was a dignified and peaceful demonstration sans arson and it would have been very constructive to have based your counsels on something much more wider and general than having to pick on a single instance and predicate all your judgements and premonitions on unconnected 17th century events. The result is clearly unjust because in order to raise your objection to what you have yourself described as 'symbolic' burning - of just one copy of a blasphemous book - you end up by grilling an entire community of people.

Burning was a non-issue insofar as *The Satanic Verses* was concerned, though it may be observed, in parenthesis, that those who had chosen to burn their £12.95 as a means to draw attention to their deep hurt had only followed the contemporary political culture of freedom and dissent in which it is common practice to burn some controversial publication, report or even flag in order to underline the intensity of opposition. So let us put the issues

in their right perspective. But first your assumptions.

lam glad you 'appreciate the intensity of Muslims' 'feelings' and acknowledge that the 'book has given real and heartfelt offence to many Muslims', but you assume that the offence is felt because 'it portrays a character taken to be the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in a less than favourable light'.

You assume that 'Mr Rushdie's case is intellectual' 'yet instead of the 'Koran' (The Qur'an), his critics were 'reaching for a box

of matches'.

You also assume that the issue was between Muslims and the author, and, therefore, 'those who oppose Mr Rushdie's views must answer and overcome them with counter-views and counter-arguments'.

You say you 'cannot judge the issues in Mr Rushdie's book since lam not an Islamic scholar', yet, you assume that the Muslim concern most probably reflected on their fear 'that Islam is so inscurely based that its walls will fall from the single note sounded by Mr Rushdie's trumpet'.

Therefrom, you go on to infer that Muslim reaction was lantamount to 'censor', 'intolerance' and even undermining of 'the basic freedoms' and you, therefore, feel justified in uttering the warning that 'we cannot allow intolerance to undermine the basic freedoms which so many have found so attractive'.

You have condemned and sentenced a whole community

without giving it a hearing or without informing yourself of its case

No, Mr Rushdie's case is not at all 'intellectual' (it's 'mental'), nor are the Muslims trying to counter his 'scholarship' with 'a boa of matches'. Thousands of 'intellectual' works which take a 'less-than-favourable' view of Islam and more are being published all over the world. However, we never had any libra prohibitorum, nor intend to have now. We do not throw such works into the incinerator. We buy them for our libraries and universities and not unoften invite their authors to give a lecture or seminar on their 'studies'.

No, the Muslims are not suffering from any sense of insecurity either for themselves or Islam. Islam stands on its own merit and authenticity, and like, as you mention, our blessed Messiah, Jesus and his teachings, it is not tarnished or diminished by any amount of muck hurled at it.

The Muslims have felt deeply pained and outraged not because the Blessed Prophet has been portrayed 'in a less than favourable light'. They do not seek any 'favour', less or more, for his person or for the Divine Message conveyed through him (peace be upon him). They are simply rejecting the filth and insults hurled upon their deeply held sanctities. Won't you Mr Baker?

You might say that you have come to put up with 'utterly repugnant' portrayals of Jesus, Mary and even of God, but would you accept to be libelled or simply insulted in your personal or public capacity irrespective of the fact whether it was couched within a prized literary cover or it was issued by a trashy publisher?

Ah, there is difference between libelling a person and libelling a past and gone religious figure, you might argue. Yes there is a great difference between the two: one is libelling an individual and the other is libelling a whole community.

The Satanic Verses has not only insulted and libelled a whole community, it is also obscene, it has self-hating racist undertones and – if you follow the highly charged treatment of the subject in the media – it has also incited racial as well as religious passions against the Muslim community. It mattered little if the book was thick and unreadable as you yourself observe, though naturally its dense prose and grasshopper style must make it rather difficult for many non-Muslims to cursorily spot its filthy and profane droppings.

It is very painful and abhorring to repeat or reproduce the

inculting and obscene phrases or sentences from the book. But the me quote very briefly as I assume you would not have had the time to go through all its 546 pages.

Very early in the book, the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him), the patriarch prophet common to the three main religions of the world, Judaism. Christianity and Islam, is described as 'the hastard'. But more filth is reserved for Muhammad (peace be upon him).

He is a person without 'qualms' or 'scruples'. 'After his wife's death Mahound was no angel'. 'You understand my meaning', one of his Companions, Salman is said to have 'confided' while 'drunk'.

Khalid, Salman and Bilal, are 'bums' and 'scums' and the latter who came from Abyssinia is further painted as 'an enormous black monster'. The remark is both racist and monstrous.

The wives of the Prophet (peace be upon him) whom Muslims regard as their Mothers are sited in a whore-house and the House of God, The Holy Kabah, in Makkah is turned into a brothel . . .

It is most difficult and painful to reproduce such and many other intellectual' vituperations of a diseased and dirty mind, but you do not have to be an 'Islamic scholar' in order to understand the nature of 'the views' which you wanted to be answered and 'overcome ... with counter-views and counter-arguments'.

But I must admit, Muslims are unable to counter such 'views' and 'arguments'. The Qur'an forbids them from abusing or insulting others whatever the provocation. We have nothing to offer in kind.

There is a great variety of individuals created by God; in fact every person is an individual, and Muslims have, therefore, never challenged Mr Rushdie's freedom of conscience to imagine according to his fantasies and enjoy it within his private domains and circle of fans, critics and literati.

No offence is ever caused as long as someone keeps his dirty thoughts to himself or within his charm circle except perhaps when it may be found to have infringed a law. But no-one expects a 'responsible publisher' to peddle insult and sacrilege and insist on

publishing it far and wide and translating it into as many languages as possible.

Muslims had expected that as soon as they had explained their 'heartfelt offence' to the publisher, it would take the civilised step to withdraw the unintended offence. Muslim representations were cool and intellectual, but much to the community's disappointment the publisher has chosen to stay adamant. It was sheltering behind pithy and fallacious arguments concerning 'freedom of expression', the praises and prizes won by the book, its own status as a 'serious publisher' etc – and that the sacrilegious and offensive passages constituted only a small part of this large book.

It was later that Muslims came to know that Penguin had been strongly advised against publishing *The Satanic Verses* by a person no less than their own Editorial Adviser in India, Mr Khushwant Singh. Mr Singh is an eminent Indian writer, a member of the upper house, Rajya Sabha, and he is not a Muslim. Which suggested that the sacrilege was very much premeditated and intended to be so.

What can Muslims do?

You say 'one set of laws covers hardcore pornography' and defend 'British laws' which in your view quite rightly, forbid the sale of material which could be held to deprave or corrupt those who read or see it'. You admit that it amounted to imposing censorship but explain you 'believe that there is a line to be drawn between liberty and licence and that is why we have a degree of censorship in Britain today'.

You then refer to 'laws against the incitement of racial hatred', to 'laws against libel and slander' and to what you call 'an infrequently used law against blasphemy' but you then move over to 'the second issue' about 'the degree of tolerance for controversial views'.

As I explained earlier *The Satanic Verses* is obscene, libellous and blasphemous with clear undertones of racism and racial incitement, but evidently they do not seem to come under the mischief of any of the relevant laws – that at least is the expert legal opinion. Muslims have, therefore, approached the problem from a position of legal helplessness. But even if there had been a legal recourse, I see it basically as a 'moral issue', an issue about decency and civilisation across all religious or party political differentiations.

However, the media treatment of the subject has completely overlooked the basically moral nature of the issue. On the other hand those who are themselves victims of powerful censorship are being accused of trying to impose censorship! Had this not been so. I am sure, you would not have formulated your 'Argument' in the way, you felt, you had to on the basis of the information' available.

You said 'British Muslims must not hesitate to state their case' and having gone to such lengths to state and explain clearly and unhesitatingly 'their case', I hope I do not have to reiterate that we too firmly believe in tolerance and in basic freedoms. In raising their objections to *The Satanic Verses*, Muslims are only trying to underscore the difference between the sacred and the profane, between tolerance and imposition and, to use your own words, between 'liberty and licence'.

1, therefore, look forward to your personal sympathy and moral support in this matter of great distress and hurt felt by the Muslim community in Britain and all over the world.

Yours sincerely,

M.H. Faruqi Chief Editor

Source Impact International, 19/3, 10th-23rd February 1989, pp. 7-8.

## Mr Baker Replies

Dear Mr Faruqi,

Thank you for your long and thoughtful letter of 6th February concerning my article which *The Times* printed on 30th January.

First let me say how much I do appreciate, as I made clear in the article, the concern the Muslim community must feel not only in this country but across the world about the content of *The Saturic Verses*. This comes across in your letter.

Many of the things which you say in your letter cannot be derived from my article but from the reactions of many people over the course of the last few weeks. Since you wrote, of course,

the whole situation has moved on to the international scene - the riots in Pakistan and, now, the statement by the Ayatollah. I must say this statement is quite unacceptable. It is simply wrong for anyone to condemn a person to death in this way and by this statement implicitly encourage people across the world to carry out that sentence. I simply do not believe that this represents the fine and noble strands of the Muslim faith to which you quite rightly referred in your letter - tolerance, a rejection of violence and a love of peace.

Yours sincerely, Kenneth Baker

## Faruqi's Rejoinder

Dear Mr Baker,

Thank you very much for your letter of the 17th instant and for the understanding shown by you for the deep and genuine concern felt in the Muslim community with respect to the continued publication of *The Satanic Verses* and the total insensitivity of its publishers.

Unfortunately, as you rightly point out the issue has been politicised and more unfortunately the almost total black-out of Muslim statements in the national media is having the effect of portraying the Muslim community as an 'outlaw' community raring to execute a 'sentence' passed in a foreign country.

Over the past two weeks the media have been eliciting the views of the community leaders at various levels and although they were fully informed of the clear position of the Muslim community, they chose to focus on a couple of individual expressions of provoked anger (which the police did not find indictable). One radio network was so frank as to ask his Muslim respondent to suggest anyone who would say something 'outrageous' (sic).

Mr Kilroy Silk's programme 'Kilroy' (BBC1, 13th February) was another example of manipulation of anger with a view to obtaining material for his anti-immigrant ideas which he has ventilated in his column in *The Times*.

We have been told that the participants in the programme were

carefully selected. A Muslim community leader who was invited on the programme was asked to go back after he had reported at the studio. Probably there was a delayed realisation that he as not suitable material as he did not hold any outrageous views. Not surprisingly the programme was successful in coaxing and provoking one young girl, one lady and one gentleman into answering a wrong question in 'yes' (say 'Yes' or 'No', 'Yes' or 'No' - Mr Silk will take nothing else for an answer). One person sho observed that this was sheer incitement was shoved off the camera. I am afraid Muslims find themselves already tried and consided by the media.

However, let me state clearly and categorically the Muslim position with respect to the crime of blasphemy against the person of the Blessed Prophet (peace be upon him).\*

The crime when committed by a Muslim is punishable with death, if the accused is found guilty after a judicial trial, but a non-Muslim citizen of a Muslim state, if found guilty of blasphemy is liable only to 'imprisonment'.

The law is applicable and enforceable only within the jurisdiction of the Islamic state.

There is no provision in Islamic law for enforcement of its verdict and sentences in countries outside its jurisdiction much less by (Muslim or non-Muslim) citizens of those countries. Even within an Islamic state no citizen is expected to or is allowed to take law into his own hands.

So you are very right in believing that Islam represents tolerance, a rejection of violence and a love of peace.' We only with this knowledge was also reflected by our media.

As Muslims see it, the whole thing revolves around the serious problems of understanding for their feelings and concerns.

When Muslims put forward their objection to the publishers way back in October last year they were not raising any religious or political issues much less an issue of anti-freedom and censorship. They saw it - and still do so - as a purely moral issue of civility and decency in human communications and had expected little difficulty in being understood at the simple human level. In the event they now find all the guns aimed at them as 'enemies of civilisation.'

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Finally I would like to draw your attention to the fact that according to information received by us, some overzealous teachers have been asking their Muslim pupils to study The Salaniz Verses or to do a project on it. They are told it will improve their proficiency of the English language. You will appreciate that this amounted to intellectual oppression of young and helpless children and I am sure that your department will look into the matter and take appropriate steps in this respect.

I must apologise yet again for writing a long letter but I do so in the encouragement that you regard yourself as a Christian and because the Qur'an tells us that 'you will find most affectionate of them towards those who believe, are those who say: We are Christians.'

This is the reason why Muslims take no satisfaction from the progressive de-Christianisation of this country and, if you recall, they did not support efforts to remove religious education from the National Curriculum.

Yours sincerely,

M.H. Faruqi Chief Editor

\*A friend has drawn attention to some different juristic views on the application of the apostasy law. The above is written from a broad Hanafi position.

Source: Impact International (London), 19/3 (1989), pp. 7-8.

## Salman Rushdie Did Wrong

by S. Nomanul Haq

Dear Salman Rushdie: A few years ago, when I read your "Midnight's Children," I was overwhelmed. It was not the exuberance of your narrative and stylistic craft, nor the threads of your rich imagination woven with such effective intellectual control that engulfed me. Rather it was your formidable grasp of

history and, through that, of the psyche of a complex culture in all its variations that formed the substratum of your style.

And yet it is this question of your knowledge of history that I shall raise in connection with your seriously and alarmingly controversial "The Satanic Verses."

Let me say at once that I do hold you as an artist, not as a historian or a psychologist – nor as theologian. But at the same time you do make use of what are facts of history and psychology, giving them your own distinct treatment.

No writer, you will agree, writes in a historical vacuum. But then, a responsible artist does not, without powerful grounds, mutilate history. Nor, unless there exists a mammoth justification, does he disregard the sensibilities and sensitivities of his own milieu, especially when it forms both the subject matter and the bulk of his or her audience.

Strangely, what I am saying is something that I learned from none other than yourself. You might recall your telling criticism of Sir Richard Attenborough's celebrated film "Gandhi." You entaged Sir Richard, but in the controversy I remained your passionate supporter.

You censured the film for disregarding or minimizing certain important historical facts. And you said that in a work of an artistic nature, one cannot say everything, that there has to be a choice - but that there has to be a rationale of choice. One selects not to mislead but to make the story more meaningful. Ironically, this has precisely been your lapse in "The Satanic Verses."

Most of your western readers are unable to gauge the acuteness of your blow to the very core of the Indian subcontinental culture. They cannot estimate the seriousness of the injury because they do not know the history of the aggrieved.

You do know it and therefore one feels that you foresaw, at least to some extent, the consequences.

There is in your book, for example, the phantasmagoria of your own namesake Salman's corruption of the revealed word by his erroneous rendering of the words of Mahound.

Here the veil is too thin to cover the identity of Mahound: He can be understood in no other way than as a caricature of the Muslim Prophet. You do know that Islam is consistently, acutely and uniquely sensitive to its scripture. Ordinarily, Arabic is written without short vowels, but no copy of the Qur'an today is

vowelless: Muslims insist that it should and can be read only in one way. The Muslim view is that even incorrectly reading the Qur'an is a cardinal sin. The Qur'an is neither read nor recited in translation for the very reason that translation might introduce alteration.

This matter is deadly serious, and to make it a subject of insensitive fantasy is equally serious.

There is a further issue that your western reader does not sense; that your corrupt Salman is the namesake not only of you in your book but of a historical personage who was a Persian companion of the Prophet, a companion who has been accorded a particularly elevated status by the Shiites. Given the militancy of the Shiites, when you made Salman the polluter of the revelation, you knew that you were planting your hand in the cluster of bees!

Your response to the uproar has been wavering and inconsistent, and your defense has the odor of self-righteousness. You say that people who have not read your book have no right to criticize it. But do you really think that reading the book will drastically alter their opinions? Then you talk about freedom of expression. Free speech is a tricky issue and cannot be taken too literally.

What do you think the response of black Americans would be if you were to mock Martin Luther King Jr.? Or the reaction of the Jewish community if you eulogized Hitler? Or the anger of a pious Hindu if you were to present a graphic description of the slaughtering of a cow?

As for your waverings, you started out by expressing regret over the fact that you did not write even a more controversial book. You accused the leaders of the angry demonstration in Islamabad of exploiting a religious slogan for secular and political ends. They may have done so, but what about the innocent and ignorant people who died in the violence? You expressed no sympathy for them. And now you issue a three-sentence statement that, at best, has the semblance of regret. Quite honestly, Mr. Rushdie, you heart does not beat in this statement, your expression is glaringly perfunctory.

I am saddened that a bounty has been placed on your head and that a great writer like you, rather than presenting himself to the public, is in hiding. You have elicited the rage of entire nations. This is a pity. But, Mr. Rushdie, you have cut them and they are

Needing: Do something quickly to heal the wound.

Swife IHT, 24th February, 1989 in The Kiss of Judas, pp. 35-7.

## The Devil Incarnate

A sudden outburst of the Western support for Salman Rushdie, the Indian-born British author of *The Satanic Verses*, shows the low regard the West has for Muslims and their religion. The British and the EEC move to protect someone who is a blot on the Western civilisation and the favourable American response to the European behaviour appear as much uncivilised as the fiction weaved by Rushdie. What the civilised people had expected from the West was that it would have made a bonfire of *The Satanic Verses* because it is not only filth thrown at the sensibilities of the Muslims but at the face of everyone who believes in God and the message of love He sent through His messengers.

To see the Western world get riled over the universal condemnations Rushdie is getting is to realise that the Western world doesn't have respect for Islam. The West had committed a number of books into the fire in its long history, because these books either said something uncaring about Christianity or even something that was considered to be obscene. There can be nothing more obscene than a book that vilifies a heavenly religion and all those who believe in God should have condemned it.

In this troubled world of ours, there are two forces fighting for dominance: God's message and atheism. All those who believe in God should be, by necessity, a unified force that fights atheism, which in the garb of Communism is the spearhead of evil and one of its aims is to obscure religions by every means possible, because atheists know that once belief in God wanes they can triumph eventually. That is their dream since time immemorial.

This book is not only a slur on Islam but something that Christians should see as an attack on the belief in God. When the people who believe in one religion condone the slurs against the people of other religions, it might follow that people of different faiths in this world would find it very hard to live and deal with each other on amiable terms.

The Satanic Verses is an insult to decency. Respecting other people's beliefs is the basis of decent human relationship, and Rushdic's insult to all the Muslims of the world should not have deserved the defence the Western governments are providing it. When that kind of thing happens the message the Muslims get from the West does not respect them or their Islamic faith. Receiving that kind of message could very easily spark hatred which is just the opposite of the belief of Christians.

There is a long history of Western distortions of the tenets of Islam and there have been long campaigns mounted by Western people to undermine Islam. Despite the onslaught of attacks on Islam by the Western world, the Muslim people have never attacked Christianity or any other religion or their leaders. Why? Muslims know that it is totally against civilised behaviour and that civilised people do not indulge in using filthy language about

someone held in respect.

Christians believe that there had been many prophets. They should not have had any problem in regarding Muhammad as a prophet, like the other prophets who came before him. An attack on God's one messenger is an attack on all His messengers and on His message; it is but a total disbelief in all revelations through the prophets. In short *The Satanic Verses* is a blasphemy of all religions and an insult to all those who believe in God and claim to be civilised. It is the work of the devil incarnate, and all those who are supporting its continued distribution and promotion of it through controversy which will make a market for it through curiosity are aiding the devil in his work!

Source: The Saudi Gazette (Jeddah), 24th February, 1989.

## A Call for Fairness

Birmingham Central Mosque's Advertisement in *The Times* (3rd March 1989)

## THE RUSHDIE AFFAIR

IS IT FAIR that the entire British Nation should pay for one man's greed?

RIGHT that the fate of British hostages and British interests be jeopardised for a publisher's profit?

Let us be honest and not confuse issues.

No one, repeat, NO ONE, questions Rushdie's right to express

BUT-tobe vulgar, abusive and obscene is a misuse of this right.

We believe it is wrong and dishonest to insult founders of religion under the pretext of a dream.

It would be dishonest and wrong to portray . . .

Christ using four letter words

Matthew and Mark indulging in indecencies and molesting children

Moses as a racist and lecherous person

Surely, this would not be considered as criticism — it would be the imagination of a confused mind.

Rushdiehas portrayed the Prophet of Islam as a brothel keeper.

Again, this is not criticism, but the imagination of a confused mind.

If Moses, Christ and Mohammed can be allowed to be portrayed as racist, con men and living on immoral earnings, then may we ask what basis would be left for teaching our children a concept of moral behaviour?

Let us think calmly and not be guided by propaganda.

There is much more at stake than the licentious liberty of an insensitive publisher.

We urge the Penguin Group to withdraw this book unreservedly and accept the related demands of the community. It is a small price to pay for the moral interests of the nation.

We appeal to all patriotic, fair minded British Citizens to join us in our protest and write to us so that a joint action can be planned.

## Act Against Rushdie Today Before it is Too Late

Britain's move to appease the world-wide Moslems was too little, too late. The Moslems still are expecting that the British leaders will try to realize the depth of injuries to Moslems across the world through The Satanic Verses.

Both Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and Secretary of State Sir Geoffrey Howe admitted that the book offended the Moslems. Naturally this alone is simply not enough to heal the wounds of enraged Moslems who have protested everywhere they were to be found. Several people have given their lives and hundreds were injured during these demonstrations which are still continuing.

The protests reached a peak after the Leader of the Islamic Republic issued a Divine Decree on February 14 in which the Imam Khomeini ordered the execution of the author, Salman Rushdie who clearly blasphemed Islam and the Islamic sanctities.

The Moslems clearly expect that the British government should openly condemn the book and stop its further sale and publication. They also expect that the author should be tried as he 'offended Moslems' . . .

Banning of the book will not be the first or the last in Britain. Very recently the Thatcher Administration has banned a book, 'Spycatcher' for the simple reason that the book will put the lives of some people in danger as well as that it had offended some.

If Spycatcher can be banned and condemned then why not 'The Satanic Verses' which has hurt one billion Moslems and others who believe that the beliefs of others should be respected even while they exercised their rights to expression.

We would like to remind Mrs. Thatcher of an elementary principle of 'civics', that rights and duties go together. If one of these is ignored it results in a tragedy such as 'The Satanic Verses'. The author while using the rights of expression should have felt responsibility on his part for the feelings of the Moslems, a faith

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which he belongs by birth even if not by conviction. And we cannot imagine that he could have been as a novelist so crassly mensitive to the feelings of Moslems who believe with a direct and simple faith and love and trust their Prophet Mohammad (S) beyond anyone living or dead in the world now, or in any future.

We hope that Mrs. Thatcher will take appropriate action against the author and the book today if only to defuse the situation.

Source Tehran Times, 7th March 1989.

## An Affront to Civility

## by Khurshid Ahmad

Mr. Chairman . . .

The struggle of the Islamic *Umma* the world over, whether in the political field or otherwise, is for one supreme objective: the establishment of the Islamic social order and the unity and solidantly of the *Umma* on the basis of the Qur'an and *Sunnah*. Alhamdulillah, the waves of Islamic resurgence are mounting in all parts of the world and while the struggle is long and arduous, the silver lining on the horizon is widening and expanding to be rald the dawn of a new and bright era for Islam.

Mr. Chairman, in this context the problems of the Muslim communities living under non-Muslim governments deserve to be constantly reviewed by the leaders of the Islamic *Umma*. Islam, today is the second largest religion in Europe. According to conservative estimates there are over 8 million Muslims in Western Europe and around 10 million in Eastern Europe and European Russia. In almost every European country there is a distinct Muslim Community. These Communities are part of the galaxy of the Islamic *Umma* and they are making every effort to protect and strengthen their ideological identity and to lend their support and co-operation to the issues and problems faced by the blamic *Umma*. They represent the voice of Islam in the Western world and through them the frontiers of Islam have been extended

to lands not directly under the control of the Muslims. They also constitute a bridge between the Islamic and the Western worlds. I hope the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) will take greater interest in the problems and prospects of this Islamic hinterland.

Mr. Chairman, I want to take this opportunity to invite the attention of this Conference to the gruesome challenge that Muslim Communities in the West, nay the entire world of Islam. faces today because of the vicious intellectual and literary assaults on Islam that are assuming menacing proportions in the West. Contemporary Islamic awakening is being grossly misrepresented as the rise of fundamentalism and fanaticism. These efforts have been on the increase, but all limits of decency and toleration have been broken by a scandalous novel The Satanic Verses by one Salman Rushdie, published by Penguin/Viking in the UK and USA. This vicious book, which has been, on pure literary criteria, rated as low by a number of top literary critics, even as unreadable, has been chosen to be promoted on a vast scale and translated in twenty languages of the world. Even before the book appeared in print in September 1988, a calculated effort was made by the Western media to project this book which contains vicious attacks, abominable falsifications and calumnious and slanderous statements against the Prophet Abraham (a Prophet in whom all adherents of Judaism, Christianity and Islam believe) and the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), his respected and revered wives (who are more sacred and respected in the eyes of all Muslims than their own mothers) and a number of close companions of the Prophet, who represent for the Muslims the noblest specimens of humanity. The authenticity of the Qur'an and of the prophetic Traditions has been blatantly denigrated The whole book is an exercise in scandalous vilifications and blasphemous statements causing gross provocation to all the followers of Islam and polluting the minds of Western readers and the younger generations against Islam, its Book, its Prophet and its religious leaders and sources of guidance.

The fact that this vicious and slanderous book has been published and is being wantonly projected by the Western media is an affront not only to the Muslim faith and conscience, but to the good sense of the entire civilized world. To defend this book in the name of freedom of conscience and expression amounts to

adding insult to injury. Vilification of any person is a crime against humanity and has always been so treated in the civilized society. But whiteation of a Prophet, his family and his companions is a fut more heinous crime. Circulation of such slanders through restruments of mass media under the false cover of freedom of expression can never be condoned. That is why every society has some kind of a law of libel and some safeguards to protect the honour of the living and the dead.

While we respect the values of freedom of opinion, belief and expression and we welcome honest dissent and critical discussion, not only in respect of political issues but also in matters relating to ideology, religion and culture, no one has a right to publicize in the name of artistic freedom outright lies, calculated distortions and blasphemous allegations. There are certain values that must be respected by all and there are certain limits beyond which no avilized society can allow corrupt minds to deprave the minds and morals of the innocent and uninformed humans. Commitment to freedom is fundamental, but commitment to truth is more fundamental. Muslims have always stood for freedom, but we have never and shall never tolerate vilification of our religion and obscene and blasphemous attacks on our Prophet. That is why Muslims the world over have risen to protest against these standerous attacks on their values and will not rest until this muschief is undone. I assure this Conference that the Muslims in the UK and Europe are aware of their responsibilities, both to the law of the land and to the demands of their faith and honour.

We are happy that some Muslim Governments have taken a fim stand on this issue. We hope this Conference will express the Muslim position on this international challenge in clear and unequivocal terms. We expect not only a forthright condemnation of this vicious attack on Islam and the shamefaced efforts to condone it, but use of all instruments of economic, diplomatic, cultural and political leverage to see that the book and its translations are withdrawn, all printed copies pulped, an unqual-fixed apology rendered by the publishers, and a commitment not to allow the repetition of such slanderous episodes in the future.

Attsolution along the above lines is the minimum this Conference and to to join its voice and influence to the universal protest of the Islamic Umma against this blasphemy. The Conference should take the following eight demands:

- The blasphemous novel The Satanic Verses by Salman Rushdie be immediately banned in all those Muslim countries where it has not yet been banned;
- 2. The publishers forthwith:
  - (i) withdraw this novel from the market, and pulp the same;
  - (ii) offer an unconditional public apology to all Muslims; and
  - (iii) commit not to publish or promote it in any other form or language in the future;
- If the publishers fail to comply with the above forthwith, such publishers and their holding companies be blacklisted and import of all their publications banned in all Muslim countries;
- Economic sanctions be used against all those who extend protection to this blasphemous book against Islam;
- The author of this novel be banned from entry into any Muslim State;
- 6. Wide publicity be given to the measures taken by the Muslim States so that it serves as a deterrent and in future no one dares to degrade Islam in this manner;
- Embassies in non-Muslim States be directed to contact the Governments of their countries to take effective action in banning this book and seeking its withdrawal from the market.
- Finally, positive efforts be made at all levels to project the true message of Islam through the latest technology available.

Mr. Chairman, I hope and pray that the leaders of the Muslim countries and organizations gathered here will rise to the occasion and fulfil their duty.

Source: From the speech by Khurshid Ahmad, Leader, Delegation of the Islamic Council of Europe, at the 18th Islamic Foreign Ministers' Conference, held in Riyadh on 12th March 1989.

## Muslims and Britain

by M.H. Faruqi

We now live in a world supposed to be enlightened and ruided by such holier texts as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and more recently by the 'Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion and Belief. The very first article of the Universal Declaration begins by underscoring the fundamental principles governing the whole concept of human rights: of all human beings being 'born free and equal in dignity and rights'. But even if there no such declaration, respect for human dignity has always been regarded as a fundamental basis in human relationship in all civilised societies. The opposite has never been true and no one has ever tried to assert his absolute 'right to insult or to abuse' others. There are, from time to time, slips and failures in maintaining the dignity of expression, but such unintended insults are always withdrawn the moment it is discovered or pointed out that a transgression has been committed.

Examples galore, but three would suffice.

Not long ago the Midland Bank axed its television campaign following complaints by members of the British Jewish community who said the advertisement perpetuated 'the myth of the stereotype lew'. The advertisement had featured a Jewish-looking tharacter as an example of a small businessman achieving success with the help of the bank. A few dozen protests and the Midland Bank lost little time in withdrawing the £1.5m advertising cam-Date. They said they had 'not foreseen that it would arouse so much concern within the Jewish community', admitted 'that it was offensive and should not have been shown', expressed their tegret' and axed the advert. Neither the bank, nor anyone else on their behalf tried to argue that the programme had been created by a lewish director and played by Jewish actors and rather than being insulting it was in fact highlighting 'the quality of enterprise and success' in the community. Nor did they try to take shelter behind the doctrine of artistic freedom, freedom to lampoon and treedom to outrage. No one tried to accuse the Jewish community that it was seeking to impose its values over British society. Rightly Mr Hayim Pinner secretary of the Board of Jewish Deputies also revealed that 'We already have an informal arrangement with publishing companies to show us works of Jewish interest first and the Board 'would be happy if anything on television could also come to us first'. Again no one accused the community of operating its own censorship over publishing and now trying to extend it over the electronic media. That would have been dodging the central issue: that of civility in human communications, because stripped of civility communication ceases to be what it is intended for and becomes an instrument of oppression.

More recently, barely two weeks ago, the microphone of the Speaker of the House of Commons happened to utter some word described as 'expletive', but even the inanimate voice system refused to transmit the word. No one complained of the system stifling his right to 'free' expression. It was simply treated as a 'Satanic' non word. No fuss, no crisis! That was civility and dignity and it should have been so.

The other day the most senior judge at the Old Bailey, Sir James Miskin, 64, happened to refer to Black people as 'nig nogs'. It was an after dinner speech and he used the words 'nig nog', and 'murderous Sikhs' in order to illustrate his point with respect to many defects in the criminal justice system. These remarks were noted by a Leicester magistrate, Michael Prickett, who wrote to Sir James objecting to his choice of words, and copied his letter to the Lord Chancellor, the Home Secretary and the Commission for Racial Equality. And Sir James quickly apologised admitting that it was a 'silly expression' and he 'regretted' having used it.

Compare the Midland Bank advert, the 'expletive' coming out of the Speaker's microphone and Sir James' 'nig nog' with the filth and abuse heaped on Abraham, and Muhammad (peace be upon them) and on very many sanctities of Islam in *The Satanic Verses*.

When last autumn Muslims took exception to what is now generally admitted to be most foul and filthy book, the so-called Satanic Verses (Viking Penguin, September 1988), they believed that they were raising the most ordinary point about decency and dignity. They were not concerned with the literary faults or merits of the 'novel' (it were other critics who said the book was 'dense', 'impenetrable' and in fact 'unreadable' and called for punishing its author for its 'atrocious English'). They were not objecting to

is 'theological' or 'scholarly' criticism even if it had any such dements. They had no wish or intention to challenge anyone's frection of expression or to impose their 'mediaeval' or 'censoriant' values over 'the civilised' world.

What they were talking about was not even exclusively Islamic, it was the universal value common to all people — of all faiths or no faith—that it is not civilised to abuse and insult whatever the context or form of expression. They did not assume any malice on the part of the publishers.

Even though it had come out that Penguin had been advised by their editorial consultant in India, Mr Khushwant Singh, a Sith and not a 'Muslim fundamentalist', that publishing the book would be lethal', because 'there are several derogatory references to the Prophet and the Koran' and 'Muhammad is made out to be a small-time impostor'. Khushwant Singh said he had 'read the manuscript and I was positive it would cause a lot of trouble'. His warning was disregarded by the Penguin chairman Peter Mayer. One assumed it was just the commercial objective to make money out of outrage and nothing more.

It would be interesting to read the correspondence between khushwant Singh and Peter Mayer or to look into the notes if any of the telephonic conversation between them. The Penguin have, however, maintained a studied silence over the matter taking cover behind the author. The powerful media have, on the other hand, adopted the cause to distort the issue and launch a obey-ded campaign of more insults against Muslims. Insofar as Muslims are concerned they are no doubt angry with the author, but they were quite clear that the problem lay with the publishers, the insensitivity and arrogance in refusing to withdraw their insult. It seems they want to turn a bad editorial judgement into an arof civilisation between a 'backward and uncultured' Muslim community and an 'enlightened' world community and by reck-ksky flaunting Salman Rushdie as the brown knight of their crusade, they have only served to worsen things for him.

Last week Penguin did send out some indirect signals to test whether the Muslim community would call off its campaign if they wanted a 'Muslim statement' in the book, paid some money to a Islamic charity and agreed to discuss the question of the Paperback edition of the book. It was a non-starter insofar as Muslims were concerned. The publishers had however tried to

approach Muslim organisations separately in order possibly to try to sell separate formulae but without having to make any agreement. They failed to discover any differences of position among Muslims who have since agreed to refer all overtures to the U.K. Action Committee on Islamic Affairs at the Islamic Cultural Centre, London. The Action Committee has since been able to bring together some major Islamic groups who had so far been working regionally.

Britain can rightly boast of having the largest number of experts on Islam and Muslim world, but, it appears, that when it came to the crunch, they all failed their country and their tax-payers. They have allowed themselves to lose sight of the real issue and got distracted by the deafening cacophony surrounding the battle to defend *The Satanic Verses*. The subject is deserving of a serious study, after all the noise and dust has settled down, but there is little doubt that the uninformed output about Islam and Muslims that has come up during the past three or four months far surpasses all the bitter polemics produced during the crusading centuries.

Instead of showing any understanding, the Muslim feeling of hurt was variously seen as the rise of Islamic militantism orchestrated by Libya, Saudi Arabia and Iran, as a reaction of insecurity by people caught in a climate of modernity and change, as a melancholy desire to escape into the dark ages and as a refusal to integrate with the British way of life. Neither was true.

Some condescending words have been said no doubt about their respect for their Faith, their devotion to family values, their law-abidingness and their contribution to the nation's commerce and entrepreneurial spirit etc. but they have been warned that if they continued to object to the highly praised Satanic Verses they risked inviting a backlash from the host community and even losing the cultural rights they have so far enjoyed.

There was never an attempt to understand Muslim feelings of deep hurt caused by the book, yet they were condemned ex parte as vandals and enemies of freedom!

Four months after, enter Ayatollah Khomeini with his sentence of death for the author and that provided an occasion for everyone to run riot. The Ayatollah is the supreme religious and political leader of a sovereign country and well within his rights to issue any decree in accordance with the laws of his country. But no one tried to take an objective look at the situation and to weigh

the probability of that 'sentence' being actually executed in

There is no doubt that and not uncharacteristically the Ayatollah had articulated in the most forceful way that great outrage felt all over the Muslim world over the unremitting offence of sacrilege against the person of the blessed Prophet. Any orientalist would have confirmed to the Foreign Office the relevant Islamic law in the regard. But then was it applicable in Britain? Were members of the Muslim community in Britain, earlier praised for their lawabidingness, going to execute a decree passed in another country howso angry they might have been?

The job of finding an answer to the serious question was left to the media whose primary interest lies in finding or imagining the abnormal because what was normal was not 'news'. No altempt was made to establish contact with Muslim leaders—individually or collectively—and to get an answer to their overplayed anxieties. On the other hand total reliance seems to have been placed on media reports which had sought to manipulate the genuine anger of Muslims.

The climax of incomprehension came when the Home Secretary amed with such sensational appreciation of the situation travelled to Birmingham to lecture the community to abide by the laws of the country or else – to get out. Obviously on the basis of advice the had received, the Home Secretary had assumed a priori that Muslims had become outlaws and needed to be lectured in a firm adstem language. Part of the preliminary smothering work was done by the tabloid press who seem to have been able to obtain a copy of the minister's speech and to headline his words of saming to Muslims.

In its now five-month long moral campaign for the withdrawal of The Satanic Verses, the Muslim community had been quite dear in its mind that given the laws of the country, the government had no direct responsibility in the matter.

Under the normal course of the law the book could not be banned and there was no law to stop or punish sacrilege against ldam. They of course expected the national leadership to show an understanding of their anguish and hurt and think of ways and means of mitigating it and ensuring that such grievous transgression did not happen in the future.

Their expression within the laws and etiquette of their country

of citizenship was in fact an act of integration but surprisingly they are construed as refusal or unwillingness to integrate.

Mr Hurd's dialogue with Muslim community leaders in Birmin. gham did not seem to be very helpful either. The passionate plea by the chairman of the Birmingham Central Mosque Dr Nasim that 'those who support Mr Rushdie's right to express himself the way he has expressed himself, should 'realise what they are defending' elicited not only incomprehension but also a little irritation. The Home Secretary acknowledged that 'shocked' 'angry', and yet he said, it is not the job of the ministers in this country 'to go about condemning the books'. Raising his voice above the noisy reaction (The Times, 25th February) Mr Hurd said: 'I tell you very strongly. Once you start on that, I promise you it is a slope you would regret having pushed us down'. There was no intention to reform the blasphemy law to extend its protection to non-Anglican faiths, the Muslims may protest lawfully and as loudly as they may, but the government could do little in the matter. The Home Secretary was quite clear.

Muslims are not seeking any particular form of legislation, whether reforming the blasphemy law, extending the scope of criminal libel to slandering named religious personalities or any other piece of law. They, however, believe that their right to 'equal dignity' as against the duty to receive unequal indignity is a Fundamental Right and needs to be provided for within the broader context of human rights in Britain.

It is not all helpful to go on repeating the admitted virtues of freedom of expression and of tolerance when that 'freedom' is used as license to abuse and when preaching of tolerance becomes tantamount to intolerance of contrary views. The specifics and details of a legal redress can always be settled provided there is a political will; however, even before there is will there has to be an understanding. The situation was well summed up by Edward Taylor Conservative MP for Southend when he pointed out that while Muslims were being asked to observe law, there was no law to answer their primary concern.

On the contrary things are being said and hinted that if they did not withdraw their objection to *The Satanic Verses*, the Muslims might as well disqualify themselves from enjoying other rights. It seems that when Muslims were subjects of the British Empire they were considered more deserving of rights and dignity

than what some people would like them to be entitled to as British

Emile Impact International, 10th-23rd March 1989, pp. 5-8.

# Now Can You Beat That, Rushdie by Mazlan Nordin

Dear Mr. Salman (Rushdie),

Iwonder whether you are sleeping soundly nowadays. A recent the steport from London quoted the National Union of Teachers as sying that racist abuse and harassment have risen in British shools following controversy over your book The Satanic Verses. White pupils have been taunting Asian classmates for religious beliefs. This is apart from the deaths of some 12 people in Pakistan and India after clashes with police and others. How very apt is the title of your book.

The book has been stoutly defended in a New York rally attended by several hundred writers, including Norman Mailer. Mr. Mailer was reported to have made a ringing declaration, "It is our duty to state to the world that if he (meaning you) is ever assassinated it will then become our obligation to stand in his place."

Suffice for me to repeat here the somewhat mocking comments of Bernard Levin, a famous Jewish writer, in a special article in the Timestitled "Humbugs of the world unite." He said, I quote:

"What, if anything is that supposed to mean? It can hardly mean that if Mr. Rushdie is killed, Mr. Mailer and his fellow writers will be willing to be buried along with him like Catewayo's wives. Nor, surely, that they would at once all start writing books calculated to give moral affront to Muslims and thus put themselves into the same danger as Mr. Rushdie is now in.

"... lam not just jeering at Mr. Mailer and his hollow bombast.

laspect that his words were meant to echo Voltaire's celebrated datum, 'I detest what you say but I will defend to the death you net to say it', but, if so, there are two serious flaws in his point.

The first is that Voltaire never said it; it was invented and attached to him in a modern biography. The second is that although he might well have defended the unfettered expression of a view he abhorred, it is very unlikely that he would have been willing to die for it. Nor, I am pretty sure, would Mr. Mailer. And another thing, if Mr. Mailer were willing to give his life for fellow writer Rushdie's, would he do so for me? Come to think of it, would Rushdie?"

You'll note that I have spoken of Bernard Levin as a Jewish writer, but this is simply to indicate his different stance from that of another Jew, and I quote here from the London Sunday Times profile on you: "In print he (meaning you) was accused of being a deracinated Indian who denied his own background, of being published by a Jew (Peter Mayer, head of Viking)."

Incidentally, the article mentioned your experience at Rugby where you encountered "the wog-baiting of English public school-boys" but that you were "shielded from its uglier manifestations by being pale-skinned and well-educated with impeccable English voice."

I have read your book Midnight's Children about India which won the prestigious Booker Prize. I read that you had to apologise to the family of Indira Gandhi because a teeny-weeny part indicated that she neglected her husband. Wasn't there something about a Miss Ironpants there? It has been suggested that the character so named is the present Prime Minister of Pakistan, Benazir Bhutto. What, no apology?

But what saddens us most is your portrayal of our Prophet

May I commend to you the following story of Prophet Muhammad as related by Dr. Ali Shariati, one of the ideologues of the Islamic revolution in Iran.

"A Jewish woman pours down filth on him from the roof of the house while he is on his way and he says nothing. One day, as usual, he passes along his everyday route and did not see the dirt being poured. He asks, 'Where is my friend today? She hasn't come to see me.' When told that she is sick he pays her a visit."

I understand that you wrote a paper on Islam for part of your history tripos. You might, therefore, know that the first Iranian to accept Islam was one by the name of Salman (repeat Salman) Farsi, who later became a part of the Prophet's family. I am

Autuliah Khomeini, and much has been written about it in the autuliah Khomeini, and much has been written about it in the loan it cannot, however, recall what the western press made of a news despatch about hundreds of people in San Diego, California welcoming back as "heroes" Captain Will Rogers and his crew of the USS Vincennes which "mistakenly shot down an lan Airbus in the Persian Gulf on July 3, 1988, killing all 290 about."

Now can you beat that.

Sunt. New Straits Times and New Sunday Times (Kuala Lumpur) 24th March

## Intellectual Prostitution

What deepens the anguish of Muslims and leads to the death of many innocents is the feeling of betrayal. Proud of their honorary white status, brown sahibs like Salman Rushdie take every opportunity to heap ridicule and contempt on the beliefs, culture and civilisations of the people they left behind.

Rushdie is guilty of not only intellectual prostitution but alpable homicide, for as a nominal Muslim he should have bresen that *The Satanic Verses* would provoke reaction of such magnitude that it would lead to violence and death. In the scale of buman worth, are the lives of Muslims still not equal to that of a white man?

No one has the right to denigrate the prophets of the great religions, including Moses, Jesus or Buddha. Having defamed the Holy Prophet, Rushdie cannot claim the protection of "free seeth" even in a liberal-decadent society that allows its own prophet, Jesus, whom we hold in reverence, to be ridiculed and hasohemed against in plays, books, musicals and films.

Rushdie's pandering to the west in the hope of raking in loyalities and prizes should be repudiated by all — especially the last. What allowed this insult to Islam to be published in the first plate was the duplicity of Britain, where blasphemy against Christianity is an offence and blasphemy against other great

religions isn't. The British, having felt the anger of Muslims world-wide, belatedly came up with a statement condemning Rushdie for likening Britain and Nazi Germany – but still did not condemn the blasphemy. The Economist describes the publishers and distributors of Rushdie's book as "those who have suddenly found themselves in the front line of the defence of western values." Do western values include the right to blaspheme and cause innocent deaths of Muslims?

It is unfortunate that President Bush should disregard the sentiments of a billion Muslims and find it important to support Rushdie. He says that inciting murder and offering rewards for its perpetration are deeply offensive to norms of civilised behaviour. As a former director of the CIA, Mr. Bush should know better than to make such statement. The West German foreign minister states that the recall of western Europe's ambassadors from Iran is a signal to Iran for the "maintenance of human dignity and free speech." Free speech doesn't include blasphemy – and the signal in not only to Iran but to 46 Muslim nations from Indonesia to Morocco. Yugoslavia's decision to publish the book at this juncture will embitter the Muslims of that country and ultimately lead to its own balkanisation. And Russia, in contemplating publication, would be unwise to forget that over 40 million Muslims live in the soft underbelly of the Soviet empire.

There seems to be a deliberate attempt to disrupt the recent feeling of grudging respect for Islam in the west. The Mujahideen's defeat of a superpower, Russia, in the name of Islam, is an event unparalleled in history. The courage of Palestinians braving Israeli bullets in the Occupied Territories comes from their deep faith in Islam.

Who would benefit most from a rupture between Islam and Christianity? Western states say that when governments urge terrorism, compromise is not possible. Does only Muslim Iran come under this category? Why such outrage over a sentence of death on a nominally Muslim heretic when every day the death sentence is carried out against defenceless Muslims in Palestine? Why does the west not react?

These double standards must end or the world will enter another age, of a new crusade of Islam against the west. The rift between us is still small, but any further aggravation will inflame Muslims everywhere. We are witnessing the casting of a mosaic of events.

#### The Muslim Argument

holding are appalled and pained that the west has not only made at all the price of the stage at the highest levels.

Ruddie's own words in *The Satanic Verses* are self-fulfilling—
R Nasphemy cannot be forgiven. But his real punishment will tapersonal one, when he finally realises the enormity of his sin.

sk Islamabadi muagong, Bangladesh

Tutte Ana Week (Hong Kong), 31st March 1989 in The Kiss of Judas, pp. 56-7.

## Between Fairness and Freedom: The Motives Behind the Controversy

## by Ahmad Zaki Hammad

Greed and hate lie at the heart of the controversy inflamed by Sulman Rushdie's Satanic Verses. The author (and Allah knows to else) strove night and day to create the dramatic image of at embattled intellectual persecuted by a band of Medieval, purmw-minded, fanatic fundamentalists.

The trick is clearer than ever. It should not mask the ugly reality of a deliberate exploitation of religion for commercial purposes. As insightful psychiatrist will tell us that a man who has spent be entire adult life expressing public contempt for his homeland, batted for his native culture, and now slandering the beautiful model of morality and spirituality the Prophet of Islam represents on only be in deep disgust of himself.

If the facts are too glaring, then let me borrow the garb of action and imagine the following.

Once upon a time, a young man was forced to live in Bombay and grew up to hate his religion, his culture, his people, the world, and then himself. So he decided to pursue a career as a preacher of hate. His name was Fasdan Kufri.

fasdan sat thinking to himself one brooding afternoon of ways

to fool the believers of religion. A dark sleep overcame him, and he began to dream. In the blackness of his room, he saw a glittering crystal ball on a table and began to stroke it. Strange names that he had never before heard came to his tongue, and he invoked them.

To his surprise a shadow appeared. His name, he declared, was

Wasswass, if you want. He had many names.

"Good! Good! Very Good!" came the low, vile, throaty breath of stale air from Wasswass in a deafening whisper. He was after

all chief of the Lot.

"I know what you want from me, Fasdan. And this is what you shall do. In the name of fiction and free expression, slander the Prophet with obscenity and abuse. Say what you will against lbrahim, and, yes, say much, much about Muhammad, his family, and the Companions. The more filthy you speak the more filthy rich you will become. Imagine the wealth, the fame, Fasdan, the glory! And think of the cash to come when you write about Jesus and Moses.

"Yes... the believers will burst with anger. A few will die. But worry not. The mighty press will come quickly to defend your right to free expression, and they will magnify your voice even louder. No one will ever see that you are crying 'FIRE' in the world theater. No one will dare speak ill of you for offending and inciting others.

"Remember this. Your name will be mentioned in every home, in every paper. It will make you person of the week, person of the month, person of the year – and I will make you the person of

eternity."
Fasdan, wide-eyed, agreed.

Bored with fiction? Sorry, this is my first attempt.

Islam is not against a person's right to hold contrary views. It is in fact intended to continue the heritage of all the prophets of Allah and to coexist with other religions in the world, as it has very successfully for 14 centuries.

Islam has no problem with individual freedoms, expression or otherwise. But one's freedoms stop where another's begin. For

less than this is not freedom, but injury.

As for the constitutional arguments that have been used lately, it is clear that the First Amendment's authors were attempting to provide solutions to a complex of "freedom" problems that had a specific history in Europe; namely, the lack of political, publishing, and religious tolerance.

The five freedoms were originally intended, in fact, to safeguard practice in the interest of truth and harmony in a pluralistic they were never a license to slander, defame, or repeate falsehood, which fosters hate, mistrust, and discord people, and which remains illegal. And though fiction specified by this freedom, fictionalization – the distortion of and events involving real people – should not be.

The issue raised by the Satanic Verses is not freedom of of the insolent," as our Shaykh Muham-

and Al-Ghazali told Time magazine recently.

It is in the interest of all in America to preserve the intent of the freedoms, which did not allow for blatantly anti-religious with hierature of any kind. Indeed, such freedom is a blessing from Allah, and His revealed truth should not be mocked by those who seek refuge in this very freedom. Obviously, no real bredom can be of the unethical and anarchic type that assault, and, and divide.

But freedom was not invented in 1776. Islam is all about tredom.

Itame to free humanity from the worship of other than Allah, to free the weak from the oppression of the strong, to free some tom prejudice and others from inferiority complexes, to free societies of social ills, to free man to be the brother of man, to the people from darkness with light, to free the desperate with tope, the ill with comfort, the destitute with charity, the homeless with acceptance, the addicted with compassion, the downtrodden with dignity, the sinner with forgiveness, the frustrated with bidiment, the tearful with joy, the disturbed with peace, the lately with companionship, the tired with relief, the hate filled with love, the tested with patience, the brutalized with mercy, the ignorant with knowledge, the soul from selfishness, the injured with usitice, and to free the worldly with Paradise.

Islam is freedom-loving. But, once more, there is a world of diffeence between the right to express a thought and the right

lospit one out like a poison pit viper.

In Chicago right now there is a controversy over this very notion direction of expression at the famous Art Institute. One artist displayed a work which consists of an American flag draped the floor that people must walk upon to write in a book. He could be it is his right to self-expression.

Many veterans and common Americans hold this to be an intolerable abuse of freedom and are going to court. It turns out that the court will decide between them based on something known as the "flag laws," which restrict how the banner may be displayed and used.

"We believe in freedom of expression," one veteran told a reporter. "But that stops when it comes to the flag."

Then what of the Messenger, peace be upon him? Certainly, he is more than a banner. He is a Prophet of God, a model of moral and spiritual excellence, and a guiding light for Muslims and humanity. Those who believe in him shouldn't be expected to stand by while his message, his image is stepped on by some leftist idealogue.

This Rushdie affair is not about basic freedom of expression. It is about a poisoned soul. This is neither Eastern nor Western, but ethical in nature.

So the "mutual satanization," as it has been called, between some in the West and others who are Muslims, should stop. Rushdie capitalized (literally!) on just this misguided state of relations. By dredging up the ridicule and vilification of Islam and the Prophet from Europe's Medieval, Inquisitional past, he raised the level of mistrust to dangerous heights. This was exacerbated by the media's incessant portrayal of Muslims as fanatics, fundamentalists, and terrorists. A shift, away from this "attack-strike-back" posture to one of bridge-building, needs to occur, though it obviously will not sell as many newspapers.

In this regard, I believe it is fair to say that had the media acted with restraint, rather than fanning the flames of this controversy, it would not have turned into the international fire-storm it has become. And though I am reluctant to criticize Muslims at a time when they have been under such an unfair attack, may I suggest that some Muslims as well could have benefited by more deliberation and less emotion. Yet in the same breath, I am compelled to make du'a for the common Muslims, who have in effect drawn a mantle of civility around the body religious of Islam – not selfishly, but in the interest of the rights of man the worshipper. Certainly, the God-fearing have inalienable rights, including the right not to have their beliefs mocked.

We Muslims do not subscribe to spontaneous and emotional violence, but to a due process of law and order. Let not enmity

when you and a people lead you to injustice. I strongly believe that a reservoir of goodwill and goodness endures in the non-Musim religious communities of the West. (We have received letters and words of support from non-Muslims here regarding this infortunate controversy.)

Let us remember, in all things, excess is sin — whether it be a politically timely zeal for religion or the jackpot fanaticism of art, deplayed in Rushdie's and Viking Press' hate-inspiring Satanic Viries. Neither flimsy freedoms nor rigid dogma comprise the essence, the ethos, the elevation of human beings in civilization, but balance and the middle path in all things. This is Islam.

Then let there be dialogue that entertains alternatives, that unulates, enlightens, and arouses our mutual passion for moral excellence. And the final end is unto your Lord. — IH

## The Position Statement of the Islamic Society of North America

We wish to share the following points in regard to the recent controversy over Salman Rushdie's book, The Satanic Verses:

1. By depicting Islam, Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, his family, his Companions, his teachings, and the Angels, a malicious, slanderous, highly defamatory manner, and by making obscene and derogatory references specifically to the hophet's wives, Rushdie has grievously offended and violated be sanctity of the Muslim community. What makes it more painful is the fact that the author's blatant assault on Islam and the Prophet, besides being clearly unnecessary for his literary puposes, is in reckless disregard of the historical truths and learned beliefs of the one billion-member Muslim community, and dehiberately so.

2. We reaffirm our commitment to the freedom of thought adexpression guaranteed to all people in this country, and which sattle same time a cherished Islamic value. However, it should to be pointed out that it is highly imprudent and inconsiderate for an individual to completely ignore the religious sensitivities of his fellows in humanity while exercising his freedoms. An individual's rights are undoubtedly guaranteed by the state, but

it is the spirit of harmony, goodwill and mutual respect among the members of society that ensures the full and balanced enjoyment and responsible exercise of these rights by all. The ideal of freedom of expression should not be a refuge for slander with the intent to do malice, nor blatant lies, nor defamatory ridicule. The publishers and booksellers of America, as well as the media, have a responsibility to maintain an acceptable standard of fairness that should exclude works of slander and bigotry.

- 3. Beyond the issue of freedom of expression, the media and publishing industry has traditionally exercised a sophisticated self-restraint in the interest of social order and harmony, as well as in consideration of moral and ethical norms and the ethno-racial and religious sensitivities of society. Muslims would like the media and publishing industry to accord them the same rights and consideration which have generally been extended to other ethnic. racial, and religious minorities threatened by stereotypical portrayal, innuendo, and false characterization. It is regrettable that Viking-Penguin, Inc., the publishers of The Satanic Verses in the U.S., has shown complete insensitivity to our concerns and has declined even to receive a representative delegation of the Muslim American community. It must have become clear to them by now that this book has hurt the feelings of hundreds of millions of Muslims throughout the world. We believe that a public apology is only appropriate and conducive to harmony and goodwill.
- 4. The purpose of our peaceful expression of dismay with the contents of Rushdie's Satanic Verses is to register the depth of our feelings against the author's flagrantly slanderous references to the Prophet and his family; to correct errors and misconceptions about Islam that are likely to be taken as facts by the readers of this book; to impress upon the publishers that they should have exercised better judgement in selecting and printing a book which has injured one-fifth of humanity; and to encourage the dissemnation of accurate information about Islam, in North America and elsewhere.
- 5. Muslim Americans are grateful for statements issued by Cardinal O'Connor of New York, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Lord Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom in condemning

whok. We urge the communities of faith in North America and their voices of condemnation to ours. In the face of such containing the person of the Prophet Abraham, the patriarch of Islam, instantly, and Judaism.

- 6 Despite our strong feelings about the contents of this sucinspiring book, Islam does not condone violence or the saltment to violence directed against its author and those seciated with its publication. Equally, we cannot condone the salty incendiary remarks of those who have suggested that saltment against Muslims at large.
- 1. Muslim Americans recognize those individuals in the news coda who extended themselves to bring a balance of opinion and commentary to the American public throughout this affair. We auxiously await the day this attitude will become generalized throughout the fourth estate.
- Relatis only sensible and in harmony with the American radion of fairness and tolerance for publishers and booksellers at the United States to refuse to broker hate against Islam and Nadms-or any other religion or people for that matter and uroluntarily withdraw this slanderous work from their shelves. We condemn the threat or use of violence to secure such in American and European novelists to taunt Muslims on both roughout the world with public readings constituted and in Islam and its revered principal figures.
- 9. Muslim Americans affirm their belief in and commitment unbe One True God of all humanity; and affirm their utmost spect for all the Prophets and Messengers including Noah, thatam, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad (may the peace and because of God be upon them all); and affirm their commitment unburn equality and brotherhood. For all this is vital to the aral-social order, and a light unto humanity.

bibe words of Allah as revealed to the Prophet Muhammad in

My Lord has forbidden indecencies, whether open or veiled, in and violence, and that you associate with Allah that for

which He sent down no authority, and that you say concerning Allah what you know not (7:33)

O mankind! We have created you male and female, and appointed you peoples and tribes, that you may know one another. Surely the noblest among you in the sight of Allah is the most God-fearing of you (49:13)

Source: Islamic Horizons, 18/1-4, March-April 1989, pp. 40-3.

# Novelist's Freedom vs Worshipper's Dignity

by Ali Mazrui

In the autumn of 1988 a debate started in Britain. It concerned Salman Rushdie's novel, *The Satanic Verses*. Muslims in Britain exploded in indignation. The novel was declared blasphemous and copies were ceremonially burnt.

In November 1988 I visited Lahore and Islamabad in Pakistan. Discussions about Rushdie's novel had already started there. One analogy particularly struck me. 'It is as if Rushdie had composed a brilliant poem about the private parts of his parents, and then recited the poem in the market place to the cheers and laughter of strangers! These strangers then paid him money for all the jokes about his parents' genitalia.' This charge that I heard levelled against Rushdie in Pakistan was of pornographic betrayal of ancestry. It was a concept of treason in a special sense.

In February 1989 Ayatullah Khomeini passed the death sentence on Salman Rushdie. Other leaders in Teheran offered a reward to anybody who killed Rushdie. Before long the reward had risen beyond \$5 million dollars – and diplomatic relations between Britain and Iran rapidly deteriorated. Britain was supported by its partners in the European community, and the President of the United States expressed concern.

The West was bewildered by the depth of Muslim anger. The Muslims were bewildered by western insensitivity. Was this yet another problem of conflict of culture? Westerners had been busy

## The Muslim Argument

taking for motives behind the reaction of Muslims.

. Was Iran's reaction due to a battle between moderates and

. Was Rajiv Gandhi courting the Muslim vote in India?

- Was Benazir Bhutto in Pakistan being undermined through Robbie?

Motives of writer Salman Rushdie hardly interest western publical speculators. On the other hand, Muslims are more assisted by the author's motives than by the motives of the amountations in the streets of Dhaka and Karachi. Westerners find it hard to understand the anger of the demonstrators and of the governmental bans. Muslims find it hard to understand what they regard as the author's cultural treachery.

As for the assertion that one cannot be indignant about a book aless one has read it himself or herself, it is a new qualification about having an opinion: that you cannot form an opinion unless on have experienced the thing yourself. There are millions of being Christians who have read only a few pages of the Bible. There are also Muslims who can read the Qur'an without motivated in the Torah. Many of those who have theories about Ayatullah Khomeini do not speak a word of Farsi. How many know from direct experience that Khomeini has really pased the death sentence on Rushdie? What about those indignant Muslims who have read the book? There is the assumption that all Muslim critics of Rushdie must be ignorant of the English language or incapable of understanding great literature.

#### Imagen: Political and Cultural

Central to the crisis of mutual incomprehension was indeed the mozet of treason. The western world does understand the mozet of treason to the state. Indeed, the West understands apial punishment imposed on a traitor to the state. What the West does not understand is the idea of treason to what Islam alk the Umma, the religious community, treason to the faith. English law does not always distinguish between the state and the Royal Family. Treason in England has included violating the law to consort, or raping the monarch's eldest unmarried daughts well as the sexual violation of the wife of the eldest son

and heir. To the present day treason under English law includes 'polluting' the Royal bloodline or obscuring it. In addition, English law does of course regard it as treasonable the act of 'giving aid and comfort to the King's enemies.'

The basic law of the United States defines treason more narrowly in terms of war and military defence. The American founding fathers were aware that the concept of 'treason' could be used by tyrants as an excuse for suppressing liberty, stifling dissent, or preventing legitimate rebellion. The founding fathers' own revolt against King George III of England was 'treason' against the English monarch.

And so the American Constitution defined treason to the United States as consisting 'only in levying war against them, and in adhering to their enemies, giving them aid and comfort.'

In the twentieth century defending the United States came to mean defending its ideology of liberal capitalism against the threat of communism, real or perceived. The hysteria of the McCarthy era soon after the Second World War hit Julius and Ethel Rosenberg in June 1953. Julius had once been an active member of the Communist Party. They were executed as spies at the ages of 35 and 32 respectively.

Britain executed after World War II a Briton who had broadcast propaganda on the radio on behalf of Nazi Germany. And in the Middle of World War I, Sir Roger Casement – an Irish patriot who had served Britain well for a long time and then turned against Britain for the sake of Irish freedom – was executed for treason. Strangely enough, last-minute evidence of Casement's alleged homosexuality sealed his fate. Treason to his King was confused with treason to his gender.

In Islam there is no sharp distinction between church and state. The concept of treason is often indistinguishable from apostasy. The supreme penalty of treason to the *Umma* was indeed often death.

For his novel The Satanic Verses Salman Rushdie was perceived by many Muslims as being guilty of cultural treason. Rushdie had not merely rejected Islam: nor had he merely disagreed with it. Almost unanimously Muslims who had read the book concluded that Rushdie had abused Islam. What is more, he had been lionised, praised and lavishly rewarded and financed by outright enemies and hostile critics of Islam.

sale. Scottish law until the 18th century made blasphemy tale. Scottish law until the 18th century made blasphemy a crime but also a capital offence. The Scottish heritage back at least to the Mosaic Law on one side and the legacy Roman Emperor Justinian I, on the other. Mosaic law decreed by stoning as the penalty for the blasphemer. Emperor Laminan - who reigned from 527 to 565 A.D. - reinforced the but penalty for blasphemy.

in Britain today blasphemy is no longer a capital crime — but is still both a statutory and common law offence. It has been morphised as an offence under the common law from the 17th ratury. But blasphemy in Britain is only applicable to the lagican faith. On February 20, 1989 sections of the British press raced the question of whether it was not time that blasphemy in Britain was also defined in reference to Judaism, Hinduism and bim, all of which are well represented in the British population.

Pethaps the most fundamental blasphemy in Salman Rushdie's not oncerns the very title of his novel, *The Satanic Verses*. To epan the issues to people in the western world let us first place be Qur'an, the holy book of Islam, in the context of world tenture. It is not just Rushdie's book which should concern issem historians of literature. It is also The Qur'an itself as a not of art—the book which Rushdie virtually abuses by calling the Satanic Verses.'

## The Qur'an as World Literature

The Qur'an is the most widely read book in its original language unan history. The Bible is the most widely read book in reduction. The Bible is also a multi-authored work. But the Wanis in a class by itself as a book which is recited by millions their times every day, in the very language in which that first written.

Our an is also a work of immense learning and versatility blowly sensitised to the legacies of both the Christian Bible the lewish Torah. In addition it shows a capacity for direct state change, moral reform, refinement of rules of etiquette, the power of poetry. Could such a book have been written state of the power of poetry. Could such a book have been written state of the district of the state of the

could more easily be explained. There is a religious doctrine in Islam to the effect that the Qur'an is impossible to imitate. And vet no book in history has been subjected to more attempts at imitation. No other Arab of Muhammad's (peace be upon him) day has been put forward as the 'real' author of the Qur'an. To Muslims, the secret of the miracle is, quite simply, that it is the Word of God

Salman Rushdie's blasphemy does not lie in his saying that the Qur'an is the work of Muhammad. If Salman Rushdie had simply said that the Qur'an was the work of the Prophet Muhammad and not the word of God, he would have been repeating the normal interpretation of non-Muslims. The blasphemy lies more in Rushdie's suggestion that it is the work of the Devil. By the term 'Satanic Verses' he refers to more than an alleged incident in the history of Islamic revelation. Rushdie suggests that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is incapable of distinguishing between inspiration through an angel and inspiration from a devil. Indeed, Rushdie gives the Prophet a name which Rushdie himself describes as 'the Devil's synonym: Mahound.'

Rushdie suggests that Muhammad (peace be upon him) was not only incapable of distinguishing between what had been inspired by the Devil and what had come from the Archangel. Muhammad (peace be upon him) could not even tell between what he himself had dictated to the scribe and what the scriber had mischievously substituted. The Persian scribe in Rushdie's book tells us how he first changed little things in what the Prophet (peace be upon him) had dictated to see if Muhammad (peace be upon him) would notice.

'Little things at first. If Mahound recited a verse in which God was described as all-hearing, all-knowing, I would write, all knowing, all wise. Here's the point: Mahound did not notice the alterations . . . So the next time I changed a bigger thing. He said Christian, I wrote down Jew. He'd notice that, surely; how could he not? But when I read him the chapter he nodded and thanked me politely, and I went out of the tent with tears in my eyes . . . ' (p.368)

In the end the scribe carried it too far, and Mahound's suspicion was aroused. But the novelist Rushdie has already done his mischief of creating doubt about the authenticity of the Qur'an even as Muhammad's (peace be upon him) own work, let alone as the word of God.

The Qur'an is also the ultimate constitution of the community Melevers American political morality expects its citizens to be not to uphold, protect and defend the Constitution of the Inited States. 'Muslims expect all believers to be ready to defend & Our an as their own ultimate fundamental law.

Rushdie not only casts doubt on the authenticity of the source of that fundamental law. He satirizes its rules and attributes Sapous dicta to it.

rules about every damn thing, if a man farts let him turn is face to the wind, a rule about which hand to use for the proce of cleaning one's behind . . . sodomy and the missionary pushon were approved of by the archangel, whereas the forbidden restures included all those in which the female was on top . . . . (0 364)

This is more than suggesting that John Milton did not write fundise Loss. It is worse than alleging that what Americans take phetheir Constitution consists of bastardized passages inserted mischievous scribes still loyal to George III of England. If American patriotism consists of upholding, protecting and defendmy the Constitution of the United States, does not casting doubt in the authenticity of the Constitution come close to being the ultimate treason?

#### The Defamation of the Dead

Another issue of conflict of cultures at the centre of the Rushdie obtate is the question of comparative defamation. Western law of libel and slander tends to focus on the individual, and seldom ma whole class of people. American law is more sensitive to das action' than British law is, but on the whole it is individuals Tiber than groups of people who sue under libel or slander in vestem societies.

lo Salman Rushdie's novel the question arose whether he has thelled whole classes of Muslims - ranging from the Shiites (as Imbolized by Rushdie's character 'the Imam') to the wives of Prophet Muhammad.

A related difficulty concerns the fact that western law provides in little protection against libel for those who are dead. If twelve tonen alive today were portrayed in a novel under their own as the equivalent of prostitutes, they would have some

kind of legal recourse. But Rushdie is libelling women who have been dead some fourteen hundred years – the wives of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Reputations of people who have been dead for so long have very little protection under western concepts of libel and slander.

It is true that Rushdie does not say it was the Prophet's real wives who were prostitutes. He creates prostitutes who adopt the names of the Prophet's wives – whores who play at being the spouses of Mahound. Rushdie uses the trick of a play within a play – like Hamlet staging a play in order to find out if his uncle killed his father before marrying his mother.

Rushdie suggests that the customers of the prostitutes get additional sexual excitement out of pretending to make love to the Prophet's wives.

'the fifteen-year-old whore 'Ayesha' was the most popular with the paying public, just as her namesake was with Mahound... The fifteen-year-old whispered something in the grocer's ear. At once a light began to shine in his eyes... She told him... about her deflowering at the age of twelve... and afterwards he paid double the normal fee, because 'it's been the best time of my life.' 'We'll have to be careful about heart conditions,' the Madam said...' (p.380).

Rushdie goes on to say that the prostitutes who were pretending to be Mahound's wives became:

'so skillful in their roles that their previous selves began to fade away . . . and the day came when the prostitutes went together to the Madam to announce that now that they had begun to think of themselves as the wives of the prophet they required a better grade of husband than some spurting stone . . The Madam then married them all off herself, and in that den of degeneracy, that anti-mosque, that labyrinth of profanity, Baal became the husband of the wives of the former businessman, Mahound' (p.383).

In other words all the prostitutes were 'married' to the character called Baal who pretended to be a eunuch at the brothel. Baal, as the 'husband' of twelve whores, pretended to be the Prophet Mahound. He even fell in love with 'Ayesha', the prostitute named after the Prophet's favourite wife.

In short, (Baal) had fallen prey to the seductions of becoming the secret, profane mirror of Mahound . . . ' (p.382).

Ruhdie's game of 'the play within the play' is nevertheless a postulution of the reputations of 12 innocent and respectable when Had these women been alive western law would have posteted their reputations. But being deceased for so long, western law offers no sanctuary.

Is Salanic Verses the equivalent of The Last Temptation of Chrui? In the film Jesus is portrayed as dreaming out his sexual lanaies. The hypothesis is offensive to both Christians and Muslims (since Jesus is a revered Prophet in Islam). But while The Last Temptation of Christ is indeed un-Christian, it is not dutile. Jesus is portrayed as essentially good, even divine. But its goodness is struggling with his humanity as he approaches out It is almost like the human anguish which made him cry out Father, why have you forsaken me? On the whole, therefore, The Last Temptation of Christ is far less abusive of Jesus than Rushdie has been of the Prophet and his wives.

The real equivalent of comparative blasphemy would be in portraying the Virgin Mary as a prostitute, and Jesus as the son done of her sexual clients. Also comparable would be any novel based on the thesis that the 12 apostles were Jesus's homosexual bors, and the Last Supper was their last sexual orgy together. It would be interesting to speculate which ones of the leading water writers would march in a procession in defence of the limits of such a novelist.

What is clear is that neither the Virgin Mary in the first hypothesis of prostitution nor Jesus and the Twelve Apostles in the second hypothesis of a homosexual orgy would receive much traingrotection under western laws of libel, slander or defamation.

# Comparative Censorship

Under English law, on the other hand, there could be some Motetion under the laws against blasphemy. And throughout the western world there is one medium which would almost catainly censor any artistic work based on the thesis that Mary has a prostitute or Jesus a homosexual. That medium is television processly that medium which in the West can reach the largest

number of people. All western protestations of freedom of speech are contradicted daily by censorship (official and unofficial) on western mass media. It is to this problem of comparative censorship that we must now turn. To a certain extent censorship in the industrialized world has basically moved from the printed word to the electronic media.

In Britain elaborate efforts have been made by the Thatcher government to stop or discourage journalists interviewing so-called Northern Ireland 'terrorists'. Margaret Thatcher has argued that publicity is the oxygen of terrorism. Is that different from saying democracy is the oxygen of terrorism?

In parts of the United Kingdom you can quote a so-called militant of the Irish Republican Army – but you may not let his own voice say those words. Nor may you show him visibly on TV

making his case.

Sinn Fein as a political arm of the Irish Republican Army is also subject to severe censorship in parts of the United Kingdom – especially on the electronic media. Even elected parliamentarians for that particular political party are subject to those constraints.

Peter Wright's book Spycatcher was chased by Margaret Thatcher's government to different parts of the White Commonwealth – in a bid by the British government to have the book banned. The Thatcher Government did not always have its way as it traversed the world to get the book suppressed. But the very fact that the Government of Britain had criteria of censorship of its own (however secular) belies the same Government's protestations in defence of Rushdie's 'freedom of expression'. Margaret Thatcher was on firmer moral ground in defending Rushdie's life.

I personally have also been censored in Britain and the United States, as well as in South Africa and my own native Kenya. In program 3 'New Gods' of my BBC/PBS Television series *The Africans: A Triple Heritage* I start with a bust of Karl Marx. The viewer is supposed to hear my voice saying:

'Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature and the soul of soul-less conditions.' So said Karl Mark, the last of the great

Jewish Prophets.

The Public Broadcasting System was afraid of offending Jewish viewers. The potentially offending phrase was 'the last of the great Jewish prophets'.

Veners in the United States did not hear me say 'the last of great Jewish prophets'. It was censored, in spite of the fact that it difficult for me to make the case about 'the Semitic and on Africa' (Jesus, Muhammad and Marx).

gut since the series had already been shown in Britain, many inchan journalists knew about the decision. The president of the was attacked at the National Press Club in Washington, no for showing a TV series which had previously had the

allement the last of the great Jewish prophets'.

No journalist anywhere in the U.S.A. took up the cudgels on whalf on the issue of my being able to say that Marx was the set of the great Jewish Prophets. Originally I expected criticism mamy Marxist friends. Marxists might not want to concede that the was a 'prophet' when he personally saw himself as a synthist. Marx had repudiated his Jewish heritage — so the lartists might object to my referring to it. But in America it was my Marxist friends who were offended — it was my Jewish heritage.

WETA and the PBS decided to delete the phrase, 'the last of the great Jewish prophets' – the most direct form of censorship rearised on The Africans. WETA believed that a hostile alliance dRightwing gentiles and irate Jewish liberals was more than the criss could cope with in the U.S.A. So the phrase was well and only excised. But even this was not enough to put an end to the land quiete of the TV critic of the New York Times, John Can, complained that there was not enough reference to the sain The Africans. He also complained that there was virtually writerince to Israel. In reality there were references to Jews in he out of the nine programmes – including the most moving Modernic to open and the sain The Africans of all, made in a slave dungeon in Ghana in Programme 4:

As an African visiting a place like this, seeing all this, I begin to have some kind of idea as to what the Jew might feel if he visits Auschwitz or some other Nazi German concentration camp and sense those powerful emotions of bewilderment, of anger, of infinite sadness.'

Moreover, The Africans showed only four non-African counbes on the screen as part of the story – Britain (a former colonial Poet), France (also a former colonial power), the United States (a superpower) and Jerusalem (the Knesset and all). Programme 3 covered Sadat's historic visit to Jerusalem.

It is not clear how much more about Israel and Jews John Corry wanted in a television series about Africa before he would accept the 'balance' was right! It is ironic that in a review of the companion book to the TV series a reviewer in the British Journal, African Affairs (January 1987), the Journal of The Royal African Society, complained that I devoted too much space in the book to the Jews. The book-reviewer was convinced that I was exaggerating the relevance of 'the Jewish Question' to the African condition.

What was the reaction of the Jews themselves? Israelis saw The Africans when it was shown across the border in Jordan. The Jerusalem Post reviewed the companion book and referred to the Jordanian showing of the series. The Post's review was sympathetic and emphasized my treatment of the Jews in the book. An Israeli Fellow of an Oxford College in Britain wrote enthusiastically to me about the TV series. My boss at the University of Michigan at the time, President Harold Shapiro and his wife Vivian, held a major reception in honour of my TV series and also hosted a distinguished dinner in my honour. All this in the midst of the controversy. (Since then Professor Shapiro has left Michigan to become Princeton University's first Jewish President ever). But the fact remains that American gentiles censored me in order to protect the presumed sensitivities of the Jews.

# Comparative Incitement to Violence

What about Ayatullah Khomeini's death sentence on Salman Rushdie? Surely that is completely outside western standards of legitimate behaviour? What was new about the Ayatullah Khomeini's death sentence was not the idea of murder by remote control – it was the openness with which it was declared. It was worthy of Agatha Christie's famous title A Murder is Announced. If western countries want to kill somebody in some other country, it becomes part of a covert operation. The Central Intelligence Agency or MI5 may take the initiative. The Israelis may fly all the way to Tunis and kill somebody in his bed. Western cinemagoers enjoy James Bond 007. He is simply an exaggeration of something utterly believable. As for Mission Impossible for

TV viewers, it emphasizes the principle of deniability.

Should you or your associates ever get caught, the Secretary all totally disavow any link with you. This tape will self-destruct in five seconds. Good Luck, Jim.'

As for attempted assassination by bombing, there seems little with that the Reagan Administration wanted to kill Mu'ammar (what from the air in the course of the bombing in Tripoli in the planes had instructions to bomb what they thought was instidence. In a bid to kill Qadhafi, the Americans killed a lot of other people – and missed their primary target. They did kill Qadhafis adopted child, though. Was that a consolation prize? In the 1960s the Americans also conspired to kill Fidel Castro. Then there was President Reagan's declaration to alleged termorts You can run, but you cannot hide. This was a declaration that the sovereignty of other countries was no asylum for enemies of America. The United States skyjacked an Egyptian civilian arplane in international skies because there was a suspect on the united States also deliberately violated Italian preference in the course of the same operation.

A dual way in which the West contrives to catch suspects is abort by direct kidnapping or by enticing the victim just beyond appricular country's territorial waters. A particularly interesting distration is that of the Israeli nuclear scientist, Vanunu. To many Israelis Mordechai Vanunu was guilty of double-treason. He was a traitor to his own state of Israel because he published atmate nuclear secrets in a British newspaper (September 1986). He was also a traitor to his Jewish faith because he became a Constan at about the same time. (Time, April 11, 1988 and Volumerek, September 7, 1987).

The Israeli Secret Service kidnapped him abroad – and then subceted him to a secret trial for treason. He was enticed to Rome by a woman calling herself Cindy. He was sentenced to 18 years for treason, espionage and revealing state secrets. If the Iranians ad been as sophisticated as the Israelis, they would have enticed than Rushdie to international waters – and then kidnapped to for a secret trial to Teheran.

The United States has also invoked the legalistic strategy of ching a possible kidnap victim outside a friendly country's horizing waters - before seizing him. The fate of the Lebanese

called Yunis, accused of hijacking a plane in 1985, is a case in point. Yunis has already spent 17 months in relative isolation before being tried in the U.S.A.

Sometimes countries are ambivalent about cultural treason. Jewish opinion is ambivalent about Sister Tercsa Benedicta of the Cross of the Carmelite Convent. (*Time*, May 4, 1987 'Religion'). She was born as Edith Stein, a Jew, in 1891. In 1922 – after reading a biography of St. Teresa of Avila, Edith Stein was baptized a Catholic. *Cultural Treason?* In 1942 the Gestapo picked her up in Echt, the Netherlands. She died in the gas chamber within a week. Did she die because she was born a Jew? Or did she die as punishment to the Catholic Church? In May 1987 Pope John Paul II beatified Sister Teresa Benedicta – to the indignation of many Jews.

#### On Literature and Anarchy

In sentencing Rushdie to death in absentia, the Ayatullah has understandably been seen as inciting violence against a citizen of another country. And yet Mr Rushdie is still alive – while twenty other people in the sub-continent in which he was born are dead. Who is inciting whom to violence? Did Mr Rushdie really fail to see that what he had written was the sort of stuff which could provoke violent demonstrations in the Indian sub-continent? Or did he not care? When India prudently decided to ban the book. Rushdie appealed to Rajiv Gandhi to lift the ban.

But Mr Rushdie and his publishers had been warned about the explosive nature of *The Satanic Verses* by Indian advisors before the book was published. Mr Khushwant Singh, a non-Muslim advisor to Penguin publishers, warned Penguin about the book before publication. He warned that the book could disturb law and order in India. As for Rushdie himself, he was born an Indian and wrote about the partition of the sub-continent. In a previous book he has shown sensitivity to how easily ordinary folks in India can kill each other for religious reasons. Mr Rushdie was probably perfectly aware that an article published in *The Deccan Herald* portraying the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as an idiot, resulted in riots and the death of 50 people.

Even without being published in India, The Satanic Verses has already killed more than a dozen people in Mr Rushdie's country

high It has also resulted in deaths in Pakistan. Had it been hublished in India, casualty numbers would have gone mines.

Put of the price of having the world transformed into a Global transition in the incitement can become trans-territorial. The West apute used to destabilization by remote control – incitement to elective violence. The U.S. could destabilize Salvador Allende's (lik-and have the incitement confirmed by President Ford and wretan Henry Kissinger.

inn's nationalist revolution under Musaddeq in 1950s was abouged by the Central Intelligence Agency of the U.S.A.—
whits own brand of incitement to violence. Musaddeq fell and the Shah was restored. Both South Africa and Israel incite where among some of their neighbours.

#### On Religion and Race

Is the Satanic Verses the most divisive book in world politics succ Hitler's Mein Kampf? Of course Hitler's book was anti-least while The Satanic Verses is anti-Muslim. Hitler had political apraisons - while Rushdie's ambitions seem to be basically funcial and mercenary. But fundamentally the two books are with of alienation and fundamentally divisive in intent and in

Alan Bullock in his book Hitler, A Study in Tyranny (New lon: Harper and Row, 1964) said:

Mein Kampf is a remarkably interesting book for anyone to understand Hitler . . . '

Is Salonic Verses also remarkably interesting for anyone trying bunderstand Salman Rushdie? But Mein Kampf did not become ipolical best-seller until after Hitler came to power. Hitler's similable was Four and a Half Years of Struggle Against Lies, highly and Cowardice. I am not sure if Rushdie sees himself a capaged in many years of struggle against Muslim 'Lies, highly and Cowardice'. The publisher summarized the title to Man Kampf-My Struggle. Rushdie and his publishers compressibility title to The Salanic Verses.

While hurt the Jews, and Rushdie hurt the Muslims, did both the Blacks as well? There is no doubt about Hitler's pophobia. But are there elements of Negrophobia in Salman and the Salanic Verses as well?

Here we need to deal with the point of convergence between religion and racism. In Medieval Europe the ultimate religious symbol of the devil on earth was Muhammad (peace be upon him). The ultimate racial symbol of the devil on earth was the black man. Islam was the ultimate religious distance away from godliness. Blackness was the ultimate racial distance away from humanness.

Much later Rudyard Kipling portrayed the black colonial as 'half devil, half child'. For a long time Muhammad (peace be upon him) was regarded as full devil. The white man later had a name of scorn for the Black man. The name was 'Nigger'. The white man in medieval times also had a scornful name for the Prophet of Islam – the name was 'Mahound'.

Rushdie claims that just as 'Blacks all chose to wear with pride the names they were given in scorn, likewise, our mountain-climbing, prophet-motivated solitary is to be the medieval baby-frightener the Devil's synonym: Mahound'. Rushdie adds:

'That's him. Mahound the businessman, climbing his hot mountain in the Hijaz. The mirage of a city shines below him in the sun'. (p. 93)

Rushdie also turns his torch-light on Bilal – the first Black Muslim in history. Rushdie reminds us that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had seen Bilal being punished for believing in one God. It was like Kunta Kinte being whipped to give up his African name, Toby Vs. Kunta Kinte.

Bilal was asked outside the pagan Temple of Lat to enumerate the Gods. "One" he answered in that huge musical voice. Blasphemy, punishable by death. They stretched him out in the fairground with a boulder on his chest. How many did you say? One, he repeated, one. A second boulder was added to the first. One on one. Mahound paid his owner a large price and set him free. Bilal became the first great voice of Islam. Black Vocal Power in World History began with Seyyidna Bilal.

Rushdie seems to give Bilal credit for his uncompromising monotheism – allegedly more uncompromising than even Mahound himself. After all, according to Rushdie, Mahound temporarily accepted a Pagan Trinity (three pre-Islamic goddesses – below the Supreme God.) Bilal was dismayed. He exclaimed 'God cannot be four'. (p. 107) Mahound later reneged on this

ampromise - regarding these verses as Satanic. Rushdie does either give Bilal or Islam the explicit credit of being a sub-racial religion from so early a stage. Bilal set the grand except of Islamic multi-racialism - fourteen centuries before possible Carter tried to persuade his own church in Georgia to multi-racial. Rushdie cannot resist certain epithets against the likk man. Bilal. Rushdie makes a character think of the Black and Bilal. as

kum... the slave Bilal, the one Mahound freed, an enormous black monster, this one, with a voice to match his size. (p. 101)

Baal in the novel is the poet and satirist. Probably Rushdie sees band in the character Baal (not to be confused with Bilal). And that does the poet Baal say to the black man Bilal? 'If Mahound's between worth anything, do you think they'd be popular with right like you?'. (p. 104) Bilal reacts but the Persian Salman solutions the Black man 'We should be becomed that the mighty Baal has chosen to attack us,' he smiles, and Bilal relaxes, subsides. (p. 104)

Rushdie gives Bilal a re-incarnation as a Black American ament to Islam. This time Bilal is called Bilal X – like Malcolm I Bilal seems to follow the leadership of a Shi'ite Imam in reclion against a reincarnation of the Prophet's wife Ayesha — as time Empress Ayesha. Bilal X has the same old vocal power of the original Bilal. Under the influence of the Imam the Black American not only wants to re-write history. He has been taught urbel against history – to regard as 'the intoxicant, the creation and possession of the Devil, of the great Shaitan, the greatest of the bes-progress, science, right'.

he Black American's beautiful voice is mobilized against he blal X declaims to the listening night (on the radio):

We will unmake history, and when it is unravelled, we will see hadse standing there, in all its glory and light'. (p. 210)

In Imam has taught the Black American that 'history is a delusion from the Path, knowledge is a delusion . . . 'Rushdie is The Imam chose Bilal for this (propaganda) task on imported in climbing the Everest of the hit parade, not once but impentimes, to the very top. The voice is rich and authoritative,

a voice in the habit of being listened to; well nourished, highly trained, the voice of American confidence, a weapon of the West turned against its makers, whose might upholds the Empress and her tyranny'. When Bilal X, the Black American protested at such a description of his voice, and insisted that it was unjust to equate him with Yankee imperialism, Rushdie puts the following words in the mouth of the Imam:

'Bilal, your suffering is ours as well. But to be raised in the house of power is to learn its ways, to soak them up, through that very skin that is the cause of your oppression. The habit of power, its timbre, its posture, its way of being with others. It is a disease, Bilal, infecting all who come too near it. If the powerful trample over you, you are infected by the soles of their feet'. (p. 211).

Is Rushdie making fun of African Americans generally? Or is he satirizing Afroamerican Muslims? Or is he ridiculing the significance of Malcolm X? But since many Afroamerican Muslims regard Islam as one route back towards re-Africanization, and therefore a point of return to Roots, is Salman Rushdie simply continuing his basic contempt for his own roots?

Kunta Kinte – if Alex Haley is right – was a Muslim. Alex Haley went looking for his own roots. Salman Rushdie turned his back on his own. To the question whether *The Satanic Verses is racist as Mein Kampf* was, the answer is definitely *not*. But there is an undercurrent of *Negrophobia* in both books. The two books are also both *anti-Semitic* – but directed at different sections of the Semitic peoples. While Hitler was primarily anti-Jewish, there is an undercurrent of *anti-Arabism* in Rushdie. Rushdie cannot believe that Muslim Pakistanis can be pro-Palestinian without prostituting themselves to Arab governments.

In his earlier book, Shame, Salman Rushdie says:

"... about anti-Semitism, an interesting phenomenon, under whose influence people who have never met a Jew vilify all Jews for the sake of maintaining solidarity with the Arab states which offer Pakistani workers, these days, employment and much-needed foreign exchange . . . ' (p. 72)

There is a school of thought on the Cornell campus which says

the case for banning The Satanic Verses is implicitly a case whoming the Qur'an also. It is like telling Israelis that if they need Mein Kampf they might as well ban the Bible and the Mein Kampf and The Satanic Verses are hate literature—

A Our an and the Torah are not.

#### noise |

Wir Rushdie should have known that no great culture can be known by abusing it. The best approach towards reform is a working of values within the existing paradigm. In order to go Americans to vote for equal rights for women, it would be winterproductive to tell them that their founding fathers — from labington to Jefferson — were just male chauvinist pigs (even they were). It is better to tell Americans that equal rights for women is the logical conclusion of the wisdom and heritage of the founding fathers ('All men are created equal').

Mr Rushdie says that his novel is not about Islam but about But Islam is partly about migration and asylum. The Value calendar does not begin with the birth of Muhammad. It be not begin with the death of Muhammad. It does not begin the first revelation of the Our'an - the day he became a hobet. The Islamic calendar begins with the day Muhammad graded from Makkah to Madinah. The principle of Asylum is abbased in the concept of the Hijra. Is Islam against writers? Rushdie makes his prophet Mahound say that there is no there writers and whores. It is true that some writers manute themselves. Rushdie himself has been accused of that, The ennches himself at the expense of the dignity of others. and Rushdie have written a novel more respectful of Islam the still critical of that heritage? Of course he could. But it have amused Westerners less. Rushdie himself says in nother book, Shame:

"... every story one chooses to tell is a kind of censorship,

#prevents the telling of other tales'. (p. 72)

It Rushdie makes fun of the Hijra. He makes his poet Baal prove a valedictory ode after Mahound's departure from impa (i.e. Makkah).

The Muslim Argument

What kind of idea does Submission (Islam) seem today? One full of fear. An idea that runs away. (p.126)

Of course Rushdie did not know that within a few months of publishing those lines, Rushdie himself would go into hiding and issue a Satanic verse of apology from his hiding place.

Source: Impact International, 19/7, 28th April-11th May 1989, pp. 10-15.

# Secularism at Bay

## by Yaqub Zaki

To a fanfare of trumpets the British daily *The Guardian* announced that today (March 2) the national press carries a statement signed by about 1,000 writers in support of Salman Rushdie and 'freedom and speech.' The 'national press' here appears to be a synonym for *The Guardian*, for the statement appeared nowhere else. *The Guardian* in its self-appointed role of advocate for the defence (of Rushdie), for several days ran articles by Peter Jenkins containing jibes against religion in general and Islam in particular.

At first sight, the formidable array of names appears impressive, but even a momentary perusal reveals that the 1,000 listed are practically without exception lightweight figures. One's amazement grows as one's eye traces each column; the 'writers' turn out to be journalists and MPs, like Roy Hattersley, Dr. David Owen, Denis Healey, John Silkins and, inevitably, Roy Jenkins. The presence in the list of the father of the permissive society should raise few eyebrows, but the 'writers' also turn out to be journalists like Catherine Whitehorn or Polly Toynbee, who wrote a hostile article on Malika Salihbegovic, one of the Sarajevo Twelve, when she sought political asylum in Britain.

Many too are showbiz personalities who probably never wrote a line in their lives but are household names because they host chat shows on television, like Denis Norden or Frank Muir. Where they are famous they also happen to be Jewish, like Arthur Miller, probably better known as the husband of Marilyn Monroe than a author of The Crucible, Eugene Ionesco, Asa Briggs, the inechancellor of Sussex University, and the economist John Keneth Galbraith, the darling of the establishment. Others froud to have their names alongside Rushdie's are Richard Hugart, the academic who attacked the UN when it passed a foolution to the effect that zionism was a form of racism and, to mevitably, Auberon Waugh, who distinguished himself in the Middle East, 'it is believed that Allah will be born of a man,' which is why Muslim males wear a shalwar.

katherine Cookson whose paperback novels about working-das file crowd the pop shelves of every bookshop is here as is the Sillioe, a Jewish novelist of similar themes, but writers of the the have obviously declined to compromise their reputation by upholding Rushdie's turgid prose as literature. Practically the only well-known writers to figure in the list are Alberto Moravia (haly). In Murdoch (US) and Shusaku Endo (Japan). Japan (spurs in the form of one other writer, Ishiguro, who having lived ubnian all his life is not recognized in Japan as Japanese, while

Endo is a Christian.

Pethaps it is hardly necessary to add that the list reads like the mikall of a synagogue: practically the entire zionist establishment state, including French minister Regis Debray and Elie Weisel, whose writings on the holocaust (the term is his own invention) would him the Nobel Prize, besides Jewish playwrights like Anold Wesker and Harold Pinter, and even the latter's mistressimed-wife, Lady Antonia Fraser. (When Pinter left his wife and mored in with Antonia, Mrs. Pinter was interviewed by the press and said: 'I don't even know what he'll do for clothes: he has left orthing here. But he's ok for shoes. Antonia has big feet, you how 'I

Among names like Mordechai Richter, Jill Hyem and Allen Guberg (the beatnick poet), Muslim names may seem a little at There is not a single Turkish, Malaysian or Indonesian name, at Muslim names do figure: all the Pakistani Communists are the sis the large Egyptian secularist establishment that founded under president Anwar Sadat, together with colourful presonalities like the Egyptian (not Tunisian, as stated at the colour journalist who worked in Dar al-Hilal, Amina Said,

a militant feminist. Equally militant, there figures here too Nawal as-Sadawi, who authored a book on the sexology of women. Nawal is too ugly to attract men, but here too is Dabiyya Khamis of the United Arab Emirates, notorious in the Middle East for her numerous liaisons. Dabiyya is a poet of sorts, and writes self-indulgent prose poetry replete with sexual implications.

On the male side, there is Anis Mansur, married to a Copt, one of the pillars of the secular establishment under Sadat, and who accompanied the Egyptian leader on his famous flight to Jerusalem. Praised by the Israeli literary establishment, most of his work consists of plagiarisms from the writing of Louis Awad, the Coptic writer. Among expatriates there is Fuad Ajami, a mercenary who works for the American political establishment. Said Aburish, another enemy of the Islamic movement, is near the top of the list. None of these Arab writers seems to feel any embarrassment at being juxtaposed with Israeli writers like Yeheida Amichal. All are without exception journalists; there is not a single literary figure among them.

Most of the Pakistanis like Mazhar Tirmidhi and Amin Mughal are totally unknown, even to Pakistanis. The sole exception is Hanif Kureishi, author of the pornographic film Sammy and Rosie Get Laid and the no less charming My Beautiful Launderene (about homosexual life). The sole Bangladeshi to appear on the list, Safir Ahmad, has to his credit a 30-page booklet on astronomy. However, the entire Iranian court in exile is here, complete even down to Amir Taheri (of The Times fame).

Names of writers would seem to be a very flexible category, since publishers figure on the list. The entire Calder family (all Jewish) is here as is Collins and Co, who somehow managed to figure twice. Collins are well-known for their Israeli business connections, while Liz Calder is a former mistress of Salman Rushdie. The reviewers are, of course, out in force.

Since three-quarters of the names have never been heard of, this prompts the question: who are these people and what induced them to sign? Perhaps the inclusion of the Rationalist Press supplies a clue. This publisher, which publishes exclusively works on atheism, is a bulwark of the secular establishment. Rushdie has become, overnight, a hero of the secularists. Strength is lent to this view not only by the inclusion of an anti-Catholic novelist like Edna O'Brien, or of the numerous Jewish atheists and the

Usersits who crowd these columns, but by reference to the tone with the columns almost daily in the press, with their barely smalled contempt for religious beliefs of any kind.

(howously the secularists must be aghast at the progress of Islam out these last 15 years, specially since the Islamic revolution in Iran The fact that secularism is on the defensive in the East has given the secularists in the west a siege mentality. Never before have secularist publications evinced quite this note of near panic. I'll about 10 years ago these people had inhabited a world of haston that 'progress' (dialectically conceived) would eventually put to flight all forms of 'superstition,' religion in the East would do handle and the fruits of the (European) Enlightenment would spread through (western) education. Muslims were just a hoschofsuperstitious bigots, but even they would see the light.

Atone stroke, Imam Khomeini has turned the tables on them, and in the easiest and most effective manner, by simply stating that the penalty for apostasy is in Islamic law and holding up to all Muslims worldwide the vision of a State untainted by such collutions as Salman Rushdie.

Sure: M.A. Anees, The Kiss of Judas, pp. 142-5.

# Anatomy of the Rushdie Affair: Blasphemy Vs. Moral Choices

# by Ekramul Haque

Despite Muslim furor over "The Satanic Verses," the book was to be selling briskly in the United States. It is on the New York Times best seller list for the last several weeks. Some have was a this one could will have broken even, least made a big profit, had it not been for the publicity. From any angle, it was a catch-22. If Muslims and protest, the book would have sold less, but the distortions have gone unanswered. If they did, something both Salman have gone unanswered in the provided in the provided in the collective wisdom of Muslims opted for the latter.

"The Satanic Verses" is one of the most sacrilegious books ever written about any religion. And, perhaps, it is the only book written about a religion with a pornographic approach. Muslim outrage against Mr. Rushdie is not only justified, it was inevitable.

#### Conspiring to Defame

Besides the indecency factor, there is a conspiracy aspect of the book that is hard to overlook. And Mr. Rushdie, who played a greedy pawn in the West's dirty campaign against Islam, knew from the very beginning why and for whom he was writing his latest book, which is insolvent on both facts and artistic values The Penguin (UK) is said to have paid Mr. Rushdie \$850,000 (another report puts the figure in pounds) as advance money, perhaps considering the risk the one-time Muslim would be facing in the days ahead. This is perhaps more money than Mr. Rushdie had been advanced for all of his earlier books combined. It is learnt that the publishers had two other "Muslim writers" lined up for similar onslaughts on Islam. Soon after the book became a "prime-time news" in the United States and other Western countries, Haneef Oureishi, another UK-based "Muslim writer," defended Mr. Rushdie. I have read Mr. Qureishi, and I know that his writings smack of the same opportunism that Mr. Rushdie has made the mainstay of his literary career.

# **Book at Any Price**

Controversy comes easy for Mr. Rushdie, and of his own volition. His so-called fictions have always relied on some distorted facts about his childhood society and religion, to provide a greater kick to the Western readers. After all, Britain, whose nationality laws discriminate against its foreign-born citizens, would not have welcomed him for anything less than the cultural treason. Mr. Rushdie's penchant for Third World-bashing got him in trouble when the late Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi sued him in a British court for his remarks in "Midnight's Children" that she was responsible for her husband's death through negligence. Mr. Rushdie, who had no facts to back him up, pleaded guilty and both he and his publisher apologized to Mrs. Gandhi. But this time it was Muslims, a safe target for ridicule, or at least that's what Mr. Rushdie and his publishers must have thought.

# The Muslim Argument

# (nemy's Enemy is Friend

The episode over "The Satanic Verses" has also exposed the way alliance between Mr. Rushdie and his defenders in the foliable Government. Mr. Rushdie has compared the British occity with Hitler's Third Reich, indirectly hinting at the infuluoralized discrimination in that country. The fact is that form the properties of the country's unwritten constitution potents only the Queen's religion against blasphemy. Their natual disdain notwithstanding Mr. Rushdie and the British forenment found a commonality of interest in defending the works right to blaspheme Islam.

Source: The Message, June 1989, pp. 7-8.

# The Long March Against Sacrilege

# by M.H. Faruqi

... Time is the best healer and human memory being short, not personal wounds heal with the passage of time, but obviously the has not been the case with regard to 'The Satanic Verses'. The book, said to be a piece of prized fiction, was published last sytember, and seven months after its publication British Muslims were as determined as ever to get the book withdrawn and to obtain a redress in law against such mischief. On 27th May more than 50,000 Muslims from all over Britain converged in London, in the Parliament Square, to demonstrate their unhappiness and their outrage at the continued publication of this rag book of filth, rodanty, racism and sacrilege. The clear message of the march was that the problem cannot be wished away. The reason is simple:

Muslims in Britain are not up against the book, because they reinfolerant of criticism or they feel that it threatens the validity of Islam. Islam has been criticised from the very beginning of its redation and there shall always be people who will criticise it from various angles and with various motives. That is how the luman intellect is meant to work. That is how people come to Intuit they want to – by subjecting it to debate and criticism. Islam is a faith of reasoned and rational conviction and not a

belief into self-imagined totems or fetish, dramas or mysteries. Criticism also helps those who are already Muslims to test, from time to time, the eternal validity of their faith in face of new ideas and dialectics. Unfortunately 'The Satanic Verses' is not a book of criticism, much as some people want to see it in that light. Fortunately the Truth of Islam is time-tested and protected by God Himself and Muslims have no worry or responsibility about protecting it against any 'threat' posed by this writer or that publisher.

'The Satanic Verses' neither threatens Islam, nor is it a book of criticism. It is incapable of being either. The point Muslims are trying to make is that it is pure and simple filth, motivated by no purpose other than to outrage and, surely, make money out of this. It is an insult to human dignity and it abuses and prostitutes the noble and cherished principles of freedom. The human society, despite all its differences and negatives, is held together by the transcending principle of civility and respect for mutual dignity. It is this principle of civility and dignity that Muslims are so keen to uphold and have it recognised in a practical sense.

The form and specifics are less important than the recognition of the principle that it is not civilised to insult people's religious sanctities and that if someone wanted to make money out of sacrilege then he/she should pay for it. Whether it is done by extending the scope of the law against blasphemy to cover non-Anglican faiths as well, by amending the public order or criminal libel acts, or for that matter through any other suitable piece of enactment, is a matter of detail rather than of objectives. The measures can be tailored to the objective of deterring sacrilege - and saving social commotion and public disorder provided the objective is recognised. For want of better articulation perhaps, some Muslims have narrowed down their demand to the extension of blasphemy law but perhaps there is sense in the argument that the law has become archaic and even if it were to be extended to cover Islam as well, given the complicated nature of the legal procedure and the largely secular climate of opinion, it will not be easy to obtain conviction of the blasphemer. Which would be counterproductive, as the ITV's Hypothetical 'Satanic Scenario' seemed to suggest, though much to the unhappiness of many Muslim viewers of the programme. . . . The exact form of legal redress against sacrilege and blasphemy will, wrefore, have to be worked out in consultation with the making bodies, once the principle has been recognised. nut is no doubt that Muslim community has made its point. and convincingly, that the book is really and truly offensive the point has begun to be recognised and appreciated by anoriant section of national opinion; religious and political. final and non-official. Even the media which had allowed itself whe unnecessarily outraged and become intimidatory without keening to the Muslim point of view is becoming appreciative of Wushim concern. The Prime Minister Mrs Margaret Thatcher prognises that the book is deeply offensive. 'There is no doubt shul the genuine sense of outrage and injury felt by Muslims met this book'. The Home Secretary Mr Douglas Hurd told this the other day to the Tory Reform Group. He also paid tribute in the 'passion and dignity' with which 'almost all British Muslim baters have expressed 'their indignation' and said that 'every Minister and every member of Parliament who has talked to local Muslim leaders in recent months has come away with a greater aderstanding of their case and an enhanced respect for the monty which they give to the defence of their faith'.

On the other side of the political spectrum the Deputy Leader of the Labour Party and Shadow Home Secretary Mr Roy Hattersley has come out in a forceful condemnation of what 'is no doubt ... both offensive and an insult to the Muslim community'. 'Indeed passages within it are a blasphemy against the Islamic religion', he told an 'Id reception in Birmingham and the Ivery much regret the publication of this book and look look look do to the day when it is no longer on sale.'

Mr Hattersley's words were a clear departure from the earlier densory and dismissive tone of quite a few of his colleagues in the Labour Party. From Mrs Thatcher to Douglas Hurd to Roy Hintrsley is indeed a great progress in the understanding of the Medim objection to the publication of 'The Satanic Verses' since first registered it seven months ago. Clearly the views of Mr Hurd and Mr Hattersley are shared by many of their party and withmentary colleagues, but this convergence of views about the took stops here and there remains a still unbridged gap between that the Muslims seek and where 'the Government does not finguote Mr Hurd.

binchow Mr Hurd - in other words the Government - seems

to see the problem in terms simply of race and racial harmony and sees its solution in 'equality of opportunity and uncompromising opposition to racial discrimination in whatever form it comes'. Where, it is obvious, Muslims have been unable to make their case fully understood is that Muslims in Britain – who range from black to fair, yellow and white – are not 'a' race in any sense of the word and the problem of 'The Satanic Verses' is not at all a racial problem, though parts of the book are also racist and anti-black. Equality is no doubt central to social and communal harmony but what is central to equality itself is equality in dignity.

Equality is fundamentally a qualitative value because quantitative equality is a concept that can be used as a goal, but can neither be imposed nor fully achieved. And those who are talking of removing inequality by abolishing the blasphemy law are propounding a funny if not a morbid idea: of equal indignity. If it is not possible to give equal protection in law to Islam, as indeed to all other religions so defined, then it is not the Muslims who are saying that abolish the blasphemy law and allow us equal freedom to insult Christianity. This cannot be the Muslim position because respect for the person of Jesus Christ and Virgin Mary (peace be upon them) is equally an Islamic value. Muslims do not believe that if they cannot be protected from insult, their neighbours too should be exposed to indignity.

Unlike many other libertarians, Mr Hattersley does 'not share the view that it ('The Satanic Verses') is a novel of great literary distinction' but that is of little practical consequence to Muslims because like the Home Secretary he too does not go beyond appreciating the Muslim 'feeling of outrage'. He is correct when he says that (given the existing legal and social framework) 'there is no way in which "Satanic Verses" could be banned', but he is not right when he rejects introduction of corrective legislation, though the words he uses to say this ('to introduce legislation, the words he uses to say this ('to introduce legislation which made the banning of books possible') are clearly inapplicable to the situation of 'outrage' which he admits and 'shares' with the Muslim Community.

So there is a bridge ahead to be crossed or a gap to be bridged by both Muslims and the country's political leadership.

The Muslims can only do this by trying to understand and to relate to the larger society they are living in. Understanding is always a two-way thing. Those who seek understanding owe it more and owe to themselves to also try to understand those who

think are misunderstanding them. In order to do this they have to go any far except to look nearer – into the clear dings of Islam.

plan is premised on the innate goodness of human nature means that howso indifferent or even hostile the other from may be, he/she is in nature a 'good' person. A minority and choose to remain blind and malicious to the end, but this never be true of society as a whole. Islam, in the words of the Blessed Prophet, is also 'Nasiha', an attitude of good counsel at pod will towards mankind and above all it is more about than words.

The Salanic Verses' has not been withdrawn (there are other has british reasons for this as well) and there is no imminent gramme to introduce any bill against sacrilege, yet the Muslim appain has come a long way in winning genuine and 'enhanced spect' for the sincerity and seriousness with which they take

Abovery importantly the book stands totally 'absurdised', like inperbloated pipe devoid of any tune. That would not have ten the case if it had had an unchallenged print run of 20 or 50 invand and a subsequent run of quiet selling paperbacks. Its this message would have been taken seriously in that event, but the abook is about and is intellectually equipped to deal with the book is about and is intellectually equipped to deal with the book is about and is intellectually equipped to deal with the book is about and is intellectually equipped to deal with the book is about and is intellectually equipped to deal with the book is about and is intellectually equipped to deal with the book began to ask their young and vulnerable pupils both Muslim and non-Muslim – to do projects on 'The Satanic book. However, having been forced to read it, Muslim substant and strengthened in the faith.

Naturally there are two ways of dealing with a 'pathogen': to publisher an epidemic or if that is not possible then and one's immunity system and let the epidemic burn itself out.

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'novel' they understood little of it except that it was regarded as vulgar and offensive by Muslims. The Muslim demand for the withdrawal and pulping of the book is a demand of civility and decency, a demand of principle, though the publishers can still go on absurdising themselves over and again – until they come to realise that it is not respectable to publish insult and go on publishing it. As *Impact* said earlier insult only diminishes the insulter. Muslims have not been diminished. . . .

Source: Impact International, 19/11, 9th-22nd June 1989, pp. 10-12.

# Loss and Gain in the British Muslim Campaign So far . . . An Assessment

For the first time, Muslims throughout Britain have come together on a common cause, to protect what they hold to be most dear and precious to them and indeed to humanity. Now, almost one year on, it is useful and necessary for us to review the campaign against "The Satanic Verses" and the forces that have banded together to defend and promote this grossly offensive, sacrilegious and malicious book.

To many it would seem that the Muslims have been quite unsuccessful in the campaign so far. All requests, petitions, demonstrations against the publishers have left them unmoved Viking Penguin remain intransigent. On the legal front, apart from a brief judgement allowing an appeal, it does not look as if there will be any extension of the Blasphemy Law which many Muslims have been calling for. The government is also unmoved and prefers to champion freedom of speech under the existing law, a law that at present gives no protection against abuse and insult, or incitement to religious hatred, and which allows all sorts of obscenities in the name of freedom of artistic expression. There has also been a lot of negative effect on the Muslim community which some individuals in their pronouncements and in their behaviour at demonstrations, the placards they carry and the slogans they shout - acting in a manner which is totally unIslamic and destructive of the very aims for which we are campaigningfor truth and decency and civilized values, and doing great harm to the image of the Muslim community. And there does not seem to be any desire or capability on the part of the community to educate or control these elements.

the voices have been heard asking: Why not call off the botter with thing? We are wasting our precious time which could better went on more constructive things. We are not properly appropriately and are being constantly bruised and shown up by the wastful anti-Islamic forces in this country and in the west as a who maintain a powerful political and communication and the step fight tooth and nail to protect their perceived notes and intellectual space.

While some of this is true, it is important to recognize that the yadam community in Britain is a relatively young community. It such homogeneous community. It is not yet a united community. It is an inexperienced community. It still has a lot to learn. Compared to other communities it has as yet no effective clout the seats of power, in the media or in economic circles.

The campaign has exposed the community but at the same time the given it strength and shown it ways of working and meracing. The campaign undoubtedly has achieved a lot that is notice.

For the first time, as we stated at the outset, Muslims in many note of the country have come together on a common cause, to motet what they hold to be most dear and precious to them and aked to humanity. A few years ago the threat to deny Muslims tenth to prepare animals for food the Islamic way provided one platform to bring the community together. For the first time Masims from many parts of the country from Bristol in the outbrest to Glasgow in the north and beyond have come to how one another, have been travelling up and down the country I their own expense and on their own time and have made comous sacrifices to protect what is dearest to them, their love (God and His noble Prophet, peace be upon him. People whose tot was localised or limited to members of their own particular dool of thought have now got to know, meet and appreciate then. They are now able to see their local work as important and in the wider national context. It has brought about beginnings of closer association and understanding, though are is still a long way to go.

Nough the spontaneous initiative that led to the formation of aUK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs (UKACIAF), the action is now there for fairly rapid and close consultation attion on this and on many other issues. The UK Action

Committee on Islamic Affairs is concerned to consolidate this framework.

Most of the major organisations and mosques are represented on the UKACIAF and the door is always wide open for others to join in and work with others upholding the values of Islam and the interests of the community at large. There are also now regional action communities in the Southwest, the Midlands, the North and in Scotland and these provide the impetus for immediate, far-reaching and effective action at the grassroots level.

Ordinary Muslims have taken up this issue. The campaign has politicised the Muslim community. Ordinary Muslims now realise that they have a role and importance in their own right in this society. In many cases they hold the balance of power in local and national elections and have a decisive role to play in this democratic society. Politicians and political parties can no longer afford to ignore the feelings and views of Muslims. The message has gone abroad in the land that MPs and others who do not show an understanding and support of just Muslim positions cannot expect to get their support in national and local elections.

Muslims as a result of this campaign are beginning to learn more about the political processes of the country. Channels of communication have been opened with MPs, government ministers, political parties. The message now is that Muslims have both responsibilities and rights in a democratic society, and will work not only to carry out their duties but to secure their rights and interests.

Muslims are also beginning to learn about the legal processes of this country. There is much that they are not happy with in the state of the existing law, its processes and those who dispense it but it is a dynamic situation and open to change to reflect the legitimate rights and concerns of Muslims. This is an area which we will continue to explore.

People are beginning to be more conscious of the media and its power. In many, if not the majority of cases, they have come out bruised in the encounters and exposure. They realise that they are often dealing with a sophisticated, but often crude and unscrupulous media. There is the realisation that a new range of skills and outlook has got be to developed and cultivated. People have begun to see the importance of the local and national press, radio and television. They are now beginning to read and watch

They have also begun to set some of the pace and the agenda. This is a battle for hearts and minds; it is a platform for hurling insults, for issuing provocative calls, for personal and self aggrandizement. It is a battle for decency

The UK Action Committee has also been concerned to camor this cause at the level of the Ummah and at an semational level. It has pursued this matter vigorously with Muslim governments and with the Organisation of the Conference providing them with information and lobbying ym 10 take a united stand. It has been instrumental in getting unted the OIC Declaration Against Blasphemy and has conand to work to get the declaration implemented. There is of much that still remains to be done in this regard. There in been a tendency on the part of many, to discount or even NOW soom on the efforts made by the UK Action Committee to number the matter at the OIC level and to make representations Mushm ambassadors on the grounds that the governments governed do not have the interests of the Muslims at heart, to mitmidly. These governments however do have a major role uplay and the opportunity should be given to them to show detive concern for protecting Muslim honour and Islamic

The campaign against this deeply offensive book, its publishers and althose who support it and similar publications and material, will go on. We call upon all – Muslims and non-Muslims alike — twoik for the upholding of civilized values and the creation of lockly where anti-religious and immoral forces are not given the freedom to wreak havoc. In this respect, it is heartening to with the support for the Muslim position from some MPs, leading and the Church, the Jewish and other religious communities, from literary and professional circles, and from many within the support of the country.

We would like to emphasize that the UKACIAF has not used be language of abuse and threats in its campaign and will not spon or condone any abusive or illegal actions. We have sought attieve our ends through argument and persuasion, and sough consultation. We realise that the Rushdie affair has pitted at a vertable war with virulently anti-Islamic and indeed controllegous and immoral forces but we do not at the outset

assume that individuals or institutions automatically, inherently, and perpetually are against us and the values we cherish.

With God is success and guidance.

Source: UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs Bulletin, July 1989.

# When Fools Rushed In

# by Fazlun Khalid

Muslims may ignore other Muslims being harassed, vilified or even killed by others, they may even do these things to fellow Muslims themselves, but attack the very essence of Islam and they close ranks. Young Muslims who had been worrying the older generation with their indulgent ways – pool, pop and pepsi – are now returning to the mosques in droves. The degree of activism is unprecedented as 'The Satanic Verses' episode has at a stroke politicised the mass of pliant Muslims. Awaking from their docility they have begun to realise that all talks of multi-culturalism had been hollow. The secular liberal milieu has not been as open and as receptive to the feelings of others as they have been propagandized to believe, particularly when it comes to allowing them, as Muslims, to air their views.

Symbolic burning and marching were all they had in reply to snide headlines and malevolent copy. Not for them the privilege of the editorial columns, centre page spreads, feature articles, the TV screen and radio. One gets the measure of it when Kilroy Silk is given the unprecedented opportunity to write twenty four vicious column inches in The Times (10 March) and paid for it, in reply to an advertisement inserted by the Birmingham Mosque for which they had to pay over £5,000. Then we were treated to a solid half hour of vituperation from Fay Weldon on Channel Four (30 March), subsequently reprinted in the Listener (18 May). We have had 'Iranian Nights' at the Royal Court and Shalom Salaam on BBC 2 and lately the 'Blasphemers Banquet' on prime time BBC 1.

#### The Muslim Argument

neresult of this has been Muslim children harassed in schools, and adults under pressure at work and abused in the streets. It is the secular liberal anti-racist mask has ared slipped.

The joker in the pack has been Tariq Ali, super brat of the sines. One time burner of effigies, leader of demos, hurler of just. he has now joined the Establishment. Comfortably ensored in Channel 4, he patronises, like Rushdie, the people to show he once belonged. These cultural mutants are the product sustained campaign which has lasted for four centuries. First amony, then labour, then the mind have been progressively whoused and exploited. We have 'third world' politicians and exhocitats destroying the ecologies of their own countries, in justic of dollars and development, as agents of western aid donors. We also have 'third world' writers and intellectuals who divided the position of their own people as the agents of secular bigots who recognise no moral limits.

When Muslims are told to go back to the 'east' or wherever they came from, they in fact have nowhere to go — not even to walled Muslim countries. Most of the cultures of the world it was have already been reprocessed in the image of liberal walans. One goes 'west' wherever one goes. People who resist the new imperialism are branded as fundamentalists. Muslims it was are the only people left who are willing to meet this tablence.

Two very experienced psychiatrists, both Muslim, told me adependently that Rushdie's writings exhibited quite patent shuophrenic tendencies. One of them had read all three of his bast books and the other only 'The Satanic Verses'. The obvious maisstation of this is that Rushdie had written an alleged materpiece in English for an audience whose language it was not, but who was very angry about its content. Furthermore, the my same literati who accused Muslims of not reading the work, anally did not understand it themselves. One is forced to this mediation by Bhikhu Parekh's incisive analysis in his article in the New Statesman and Society' (28 March). It was also apparent from the 'review of reviewers' (Independent 16 February) that the Satanic Verses' for many people was an indigestible 'collecture of rented spare parts'. It made sense that the reviewers could make any sense of the book. No wonder then that the average

reader could not make sense of it either. What emerges is that this man by writing an incomprehensible book has made himself very rich, got more than 20 people killed, created an international incident and put back community relations in Britain by 20 years.

Does all this not bring into question the integrity of Michael Foot who keeps on insisting that the book is brilliant, and others in the Booker Prize Committee? Does this not bring into question the Booker Prize itself and all the awards that purport to shower recognition on works of 'good literary merit'? Did the Booker Committee and the literati understand the nuances of the gutter language of Bombay? Were they familiar with the names of people and places Muslims hold in reverence?

There is of course no question that Muslims have behaved impeccably and have broken no laws in spite of being intimidated by vicious attacks.

Michael Foot in 'Historical Rushdie' (Guardian 10 March) epitomised the views of those who support Rushdie. What becomes apparent from this article, is that he and his fellow travellers have their gods and fundamentalisms too. And if his piece did not personify 'militant wrath', it is difficult to imagine what did. He has taken the easy option and resorted to the use of well worn cliches and prejudices about religion in general, and Islam in particular. He forgets the two hideous global wars originating in the west which took place not in the name of religion, but nationalism. Is this not a good case for dismantling all nation states? The Iran/Iraq war was not a religious war. Atheistic states since the 1917 Bolshevik revolution have caused untold misery to millions with the opium of totalitarian stateism. Not a word about the courageous, suffering Afghans. Not a word about the most destructive modern day fundamentalism of all, Zionism. No tears for the Palestinians.

Some luminaries have said that as Islam is the youngest of the semitic religions it has some 'catching up' to do. This patronizing attitude has caused some wry smiles amongst the Muslims. As secularists gain control they invent and define 'fundamentalism' to suit their own purposes, put believers on the defensive and eventually suck people into their own ranks who, like Rushdie, they use as proxies. Muslims will not be drawn into this trap.

When the dust eventually settles over this most unfortunate business, or perhaps before it, there will be a need for a meeting such as existed under Muslims, in Islamic Spain, until

propose two main themes for the agenda of the new propose two main themes for the agenda of the new and an examination of the merits of bio-regional compose two will have control of their own destinies — something who will have control of their own destinies — something would the manipulative mechanism we call democracy. It is systems which is again an instrument of control and and its replacement with an 'interest free' economic. This will come to be seen in time as the only solution to adult the soul and ravages the environment.

impact International, 19/7, 8th-21st September 1989, p. 15.

Looking at Rushdie Affair in Hindsight: Censorship in the U.S. Abounds, But Do We Know?

by Omer Bin Abdullah

Notice young ago Salman Rushdie's book "The Satanic Verses" angothe Muslim world and threw many Muslims in a quandary. Intensity of Muslim anguish can be understood by only those bondear their religion the way the Muslims do.

New West and the American media were quick to portray when reaction in a negative light and suppress arguments that read to the real issue behind the controversy. They instead and endlessly about Ayatollah Khomeini's death sentence and the blasphemer Mr. Rushdie. This campaign was a shook effort from Goebbels's well-known method of unleash-launuth with such intensity that it not only obscures the truth assumes respectability.

With other hand, the West projected itself as the bastion of

In tackling the Rushdie affair, Muslims unwillingly played into the hands of the media, which manoeuvred them into being defensive. Many Muslims also ended up criticizing Imam Khomeini or distancing themselves from him, lest they be branded "terrorists" or "fundamentalists." Instead of battling Penguin-Viking, they often fought amongst themselves. This gave the West a chance to exploit the Shiite-Sunni differences.

The media was successful in conveying the impression that Americans make no compromise on the issue of freedom of expression. Americans in particular boasted about free speech being enshrined in their Constitution.

If Muslims had the real facts about the freedom of expression and media practice of self-censorship, they would have met the challenge with greater confidence and poise.

A knowledge of the following would have tremendously helped. The Washington Post's Richard Harwood writes in his Ombudsman column (April 1989) that, "The Censorship of speech is even enjoying a certain popularity among students of various universities including Stanford, Michigan, Wisconsin and Emory." He wrote that according to The New York Times the students wish to banish "racist, sexist and anti-homosexual epithets, jokes and other kinds of harassment that occur in small-group settings, when one student intends to make others uncomfortable." Thus we see that a certain sensitivity to the feelings of others is re-emerging after the tumultuous 1960s when the students at the University of California at Berkeley demanded 'free speech' including the right to say things that the authorities considered obscene.

Mr. Harwood says that the universities, however, are not the principal focus of anti-First Amendment sentiment. The Supreme Court, along with legislatures and other courts throughout the U.S., plays a significant role. Himself a media man, he says that the media's treatment of the *intifada* is a recent case in point where reports of Zionist brutalities against Palestinians have been relegated to inner pages and the television news has stopped providing film footage.

The censorship of "commercial speech" is a commonplace throughout the U.S. According to a Los Angeles Times study, at least 300 American newspapers have formal guidelines stipulating the kinds of advertisements that are not fit to print.

quantity against the First Amendment protection of speeches paid advertising, Mr. Harwood says "there is nothing in the or logic to require a newspaper to publish whatever comes over the transom, or a network to put on air every film, or recorded bite of sound available to it."

Refurther says: "The idea of selection is a central idea and a possity of the news business, the idea that human intelligence work in deciding what is and what is not to be published or modulated. If we do not discriminate, if we have no values alreader no judgments, it is a game for idiots."

The Surgeon General of the United States, C. Everett Koop, intranceting of Roman Catholic doctors in Chicago, Illinois in intermet 1986 that:

The issue we take with pornography has nothing to do with thist Amendment. It seems to me that our country has never provided or condoned speech that endangers the lives of others."

The first Amendment, adopted in 1791, states that "Congress and make no laws respecting an establishment of religion, or probing the free exercise thereof, or abridging the freedom of product of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to perform a redress of country."

h "Historical Dictionary of Censorship in the United States" Grennood Press, Westport, Ct.), Leon Hurwitz says that the abs yanted by this Amendment are not absolute. The U.S. write Court has upheld the interests of the community peace, it cample in affirming the conviction of a Syracuse speaker love y New York State: 1951) whose speech was considered where by some people in the audience.

In the Law of Mass Communications: Freedom and Control that and Broadcast Media" (The Foundation Press, Mineola, 1986), 1345), Harold Nelson and Dwight Teeter Jr. tell us: Restautes and court decisions say only that writings, pictures, was and substances which are obscene, lewd, immoral, lascivillatherous, libidinous, and so forth, may not be circulated in Imported into this nation."

Analyse declaring a book obscene in a 1955 decision (The State Colombia vs David S. Alberts), said it was not necessary for the abook cover to cover in order to form an opinion.

obscene. This contrasts with the call of Mr. Rushdie and his supporters that "The Satanic Verses" should be read in its entirety before an opinion is formed about it.

In 1983, the Florida Court of Appeals ruling in the case involving Cox Broadcasting and Doe vs Sarasota-Bradenton Tele-

vision Company said:

"We deplore the lack of sensitivity to the rights of others that is sometimes displayed by such an unfettered exercise of First Amendment rights. While we shall remain ever attentive to protect inviolate these First Amendment rights, we do so with the admonition that these rights should not be arbitrarily exercised when unnecessary and detrimental to the right of others." "The Law of Mass Communications," (p. 243)

Reverend Kenneth L. Dean, pastor of the First Baptist Church in Rochester, New York, commenting on Salman Rushdie's book, said: "In recent years it has been suggested that what is obscene should be defined by the local community. In the international community, Rushdie's book ought to be declared obscene. It is obscene because it is offensive to the human spirit and serves no

good purpose."

Mr. Dean continued: "Freedom of expression does not permit exhibitionism in public for individuals. Somewhere in the world of writing books there is a line that gets crossed and an author's expression becomes exhibitionist... Rushdie crosses the line. He has a right to his thoughts and inner feelings, but it is not acceptable for all this to be strewn before the international community as legitimate debate. Sickness ought to be handled in the hospital, in the confession sitting or in the psychiatrist's office."

Has speech really been "free" in the West?

The Western hypocrisy over the situation in occupied Palestine is apparent to us all. The U.S. is ready to send forces to invade powerless nations in South America to restore democracy but it cannot do the same when Israel brutalizes more than a million people under its occupation.

There are other examples. We see the outward manifestation of pristine morality to defend democracy in Panama and a cruel unconcern when it involves Zionist barbarism in the occupied land or the racist inhumanity in South Africa. This phenomenon is not much different than what we find in some developing countries where the opposition is invariably anti-national. In the

at of U.S., democracy is only 'threatened' when this country's

The University of Chicago and Temple University covertly interested Dr. Ismail al Faruqi's translation of a book on Prophet usummad (peace be upon him). The book was finally published by Muslim organization.

When a literary arts magazine, the *Red Cross*, published articles in 1989, Jews protested through the Anti-Defama-valuague of B'nai B'rith and the National Endowment of Arts, magazine of the U.S. government quickly acted by withdrawing upul for the magazine.

The Washington Report on the Middle East Affairs (Nov. 1989) usthat Cornell University was pressured into refusing D. Alfred I Likenthal's collection of papers on the Middle East. His alma satt also refused a bequest that would have established the Likenthal Lecture Series, in which the common heritage of Islam, (Irstianity and non-Zionist Judaism would be emphasized.

Dan Yaron, who has translated Hitler's "Mein Kampf" into Kore cannot find a publisher. Some have warned that if it is on published there will be battles in the street. When it came a "The Satanic Verses," publishers in 19 languages, including ktyre, were ready to offer their services.

# The Impact of Muslim Outrage

Athough the Western social scientists and media barons may stilk to admit it, but the echoes of the forceful Muslim response a Rushde/Viking blasphemy are certainly being heard. People recoming sensitive to blasphemy and use of abusive language after the garb of "freedom of speech."

Dung the first half of 1989 alone, we have seen some moves mud redefining the American concept of "free speech."

On July 12, 1989, the House of Representatives voted to cut to proposed \$171 million budget for the National Endowment to the Arts (NEA) by \$45,000. The amount deducted had been part on two controversial photography exhibits.

The budget cut inspired the incoming president of NEA, John frahmayer, to remark: "... I recognize that the \$45,000 cut littly clear signal from the House of Representatives and one in the NEA and myself personally would be ill-advised to gove." (The Washington Post, July 13, 1989).

The controversial exhibits included an Andres Serrano photograph of a Christ-like figure in a container of urine, and the Robert Maplethorpe show, which included a series of homoerotic and sadomasochistic pictures. The Corcoran Gallery of Arts in Washington, D.C. refused to hang these pictures and cancelled the show. There were protests against NEA, but they soon died down. And in this case, the custodians of the First Amendment were quick to react to Mr. Serrano's blasphemy.

The U.S. Senate, on March 16, 1989, passed a bill 97-0 that would make it a crime to knowingly display the American flag on the floor or the ground. This was a follow-up on the furore caused in Chicago where some people stepped on the American flag. Now that Supreme Court has de-sanctified the flag, everyone from President Bush downwards is trying to re-sanctify it.

On April 4, 1989 Pepsi Cola announced that it had dropped its TV commercial featuring Madonna, following boycott threats from church members who had objected to one of her songs, even though the company had no connection with this production.

The Washington Post, (April 13, 1989) reported that the superintendent of U.S. Naval Academy ordered the destruction of 5,000 copies of a satirical student magazine designed as a parody of the notorious Playboy magazine. It was argued that the satire could be offensive to some on the campus. The next day, the newspaper carried a news-item that Liberty University, a Christian educational institution, had expelled two of its students for airing a program on the campus radio satirizing the chancellor.

The list goes on. On the basis of the forgoing examples it is doubtful how any informed and unbiased American would support "The Satanic Verses."

The freedom is never absolute; it should not be. The First Amendment also puts some restrictions in the exercise of the freedom of speech. Muslims in the West and the United States have to know the facts and make their protests in a manner that convinces the authorities that "The Satanic Verses" has been supported not because of its merits but because it is inimical to Islam.

Source: The Message International, January 1990, pp. 9-10.

The Muslim Argument

# Holy Freedom and the 'Liberals'

by Shabbir Akhtar

Low does not change the heart but it does restrain the heartless.

- Martin Luther King.

fun great tragedy teaches a truism; and The Satanic Verses find 8 no exception. 'Law does not change the heart - but it to restrain the heartless'. Martin Luther King's maxim may all ene to introduce our theme. The freedom to express moons on political and religious matters has to be restrained in w merests of social harmony. There are limits to freedom of metheven in liberal democracies; and there ought to be. For it stangerous to allow motives of profit and sensationalism alone adtermine the boundaries of public taste. We need the firm oke of the law to ensure that the interests of weaker individuals ad groups are not substantially harmed by the irresponsible ands or actions of the more powerful individuals and groups the same society. Accordingly, there are many legislative modules for curtailing freedom of speech. For example, the has Council and the laws of libel protect individuals' reputations in the extravagant claims of journalists and writers. Any wid system that allows Jeffrey Archer and Elton John - and MI recently Andrew Neil of 'The Sunday Times' and Pamella links fame - to seek redress for libel cannot boast absolute redom of speech.

In the United Kingdom we have laws restricting by common areal many excesses in the freedom of expression. No-one and deny the value of freedom of expression; and one of the manual recognise in a multi-cultural society is the arealist of being routinely outraged. But the question here is a the limits of this outrage. According to English law, what a prohibited is permitted; but many things are explicitly about a blasphemy, obscenity, sedition, treason, incitement areal hared, breaches of national security, subversion, congruence of the contraction of the sure, there are the contraction of the co

of the offences involved — but the underlying principles alt universally accepted. It is unreasonable to extend this concern to the prohibition of the publication of books like *The Satanic Verses* which are likely to inflame, through defamation, the feelings of a given section of society and, in doing so, to provoke disorder? To be sure, prolonged public and parliamentary debate would together serve to establish the precise content of the law. But surely the moral concern behind the proposed legal enactment can readily be discerned and registered.

It is ironic that many in the present Conservative government should give lectures to their Muslim citizens about the virtues of freedom of speech. For we are living at a time of increased pressive censorship and routine political interference. We have for example the Official Secrets Act, the recent legal battle over Spycatcher and the continuing broadcasting difficulties over Death on the Rock. And who can ignore the formation of external watchdogs to police the media industry? The appointment of Lord Rees-Mogg as head of the British Standards Council is itself a sufficient indication of the government's desire to control certain freedoms.

During the Satanic Verses affair, countless writers both in the West and elsewhere have been busy praising the virtues of freedom of speech and condemning the Muslim predilection towards censorship. Yet many professional writers would no doubt accept that one can abuse the privilege of freedom. In the international PEN charter of the world association of writers, the final sentence of the concluding paragraph reads: 'And since freedom implies voluntary restraint, members pledge themselves to oppose such evils of a free press as mendacious publication, deliberate falsehood and distortion of facts for political and personal ends'. Why can't Muslims appeal to this principle in their attempt to make a case against the publication of The Satanic Verses?

The liberal thinker Michael Ignatieff ('The Observer', 2 April 1989) has misleadingly argued that, at root, the disagreement between Muslims and their opponents is over 'incompatible conceptions of freedom, one in which freedom's limit is the sacred, one in which it is not'. Now, liberals certainly place the limit elsewhere – which is natural – since they reject the sacred. But the contrast, as Ignatieff wishes to interpret it, would be meaningful only if the opposite of the Islamic notion of freedom was

anarchy. And of course it isn't. Liberals do recognise the freedom of speech; it would be odd if they drew the line sacred given that they reject the sacred. But, to men of may well seem arbitrary that the limits are drawn at the sacreders of race and gender.

mathefl argues - an argument he repeats in 'The Observer', if throaty 1990 - mistakenly, that behind this disagreement of mannels another radical disagreement - namely, whether of the given to beliefs as such or merely to individuals'.

Now, as it stands, this formulation of the issue seems incoherent.
(an one attach any sense to Ignatieff's claim about offence being
put to beliefs as such? Beliefs are not sentient creatures;
concequently they are not capable of taking offence. Only people
are offended in the required sense. Among the beliefs these
people hold are beliefs about themselves and their universe—
the about race, gender and religious conviction. Laws never
protect doctrines or beliefs as such against outrage. They protect
the people who hold these beliefs against offence.

The point is not a quibble. Ignatieff tries to argue that, in a becoratic state like Iran, the law protects certain doctrines while adjectly free societies, like the United Kingdom, the law does at protect doctrines as such but rather protects individuals. It protects individuals through the application of laws of libel or law against incitement to racial hatred. If so, Ignatieff has to rather with the fact that the law of blasphemy remains on the same books. This seems, on his understanding, an attempt to protect a doctrine rather than an individual. He dismisses it as a lad relic from a dead Christian past.

A Christian believer may wish to disagree. In any case, the sex temans. Ignatieff can dismiss it because he misidentifies it.

The issue is not whether one should protect individuals rather has beliefs. For it is incoherent to protect beliefs as such unless at the people who hold them and who might be offended by attack on them. In one sense, one has no choice but to protect poole, as opposed to their beliefs. It is both possible and the real reason for Ignatieff's rejection of the blasphemy is not that it protects doctrines as opposed to individuals but the real reason for Ignatieff's rejection can be as relevant inconderation as race and gender in the formulation of legal

Religion is, for Muslims, as much a part of their essential self-definition as race or gender. There is a sense in which one cannot escape one's race or, arguably, gender. But for the overwhelming majority of Muslims, religion is also an inescapable fact of one's nature. So, the stock liberal argument fails. It is not as though one could simply discard one's religious conviction for another or even for none at all. For many Muslims, Islam is a part of their being from the cradle to the grave. Such a feature cannot reasonably be seen as being peripheral or incidental to one's self-image.

This is not an argument primarily for protecting ideas against abuse – in any case, as I have shown, an incoherent proposal it is an argument for protecting the collective dignity of those groups – such as Muslims, Sikhs and others – whose members, rightly or wrongly, do define their own ideals of the worth of their lives in terms of irreducible religious notions.

II

'That Muslims are denied equal treatment under the law is,' said Roy Hattersley in a speech on 2 April 1989 at the Birmingham Central Mosque, 'a matter of indisputable fact.' He is, of course, right. Settlers from Canada, New Zealand and Australia are welcome while those from India and Pakistan are merely immigrants who need to go through potentially racist testing procedures. Catholics and Jews have their own voluntary-aided schools reflecting their respective religious convictions while applications from Muslims are refused on the grounds that such schools are too 'separatist' in ethos. We need not extend this list in order to show that all races and religions do not receive equality of treatment in contemporary Britain.

There is, however, one particularly obvious inequality within the law which has been the subject of intense controversy during this affair. Christian, or rather Anglican, sensibilities alone are officially protected. Anachronistic as it may appear in a largely secular society, blasphemy remains both a statutory and a common law offence in modern Britain. As the established church, the Church of England has since the 17th Century uniquely enjoyed a legally enforceable protection against blasphemy (where the

Anglican creed was necessarily an attack on the state.

Anglican creed was necessarily an attack on the state.

Supplemy was therefore an indictable offence (triable by jury)

Anglican denomination of the Christian faith or its scriptures

an manner so scurrilous as to pass beyond the limits of decent

abute or controversy and tend to lead to a breach of the peace.

The offence is punishable by fine and imprisonment at the

sortion of the court.

Britain is one of the few European countries in which the dence of blasphemy is still recognised in the legal system. Despite persistent campaigns for its abolition for many decades -notably by The National Secular Society - the law of blasphemy kmains on the statute books. As late as 1979, Mary Whitehouse 18 able to take Gay News to task, under the blasphemy provisions, for publishing a poem in which Christ is shown expenencing temptation to homosexuality. She won. The House allords' decision in the case contained a slight redefinition of become of the offence such that blasphemous libel is committed Ban published writing concerning God or Christ, the Christian theon, the Bible, or some sacred subject, employing language talk scurnious and abusive and tending to vilify the Christian rigon and hence having a tendency to lead to a breach of the max in the case of Whitehouse -v- Lemon and Gay News limited, Lord Scarman took the view that protection under the prentlegislation does not extend beyond the Christian religion.

In 1981, the Law Commission published its Working Paper No
R The Commission provisionally proposed the abolition without
replacement of the common law offence of blasphemy and
Rephemous libel on grounds of various shortcomings, including
materity of offence and restriction to Christianity. The Commission refused to propose a new offence to deal with blasphemous
coduct. To date, however, the criminal law of blasphemy remains
the books; the Law Commission's attempt to abolish it is one
discertal attempts that have failed.

Missim sensibilities are not protected in the United Kingdom wherthe current blasphemy law or indeed under any contemporing enactment. The Satanic Verses does not seem to contravene of contemporary British laws on race relations or libel. To

Muslims the fact that Rushdie has written vilely enough to provoke anger but, as it happens, in a context that enables him to avoid the normal penalty of law, is a sufficient reason to suspect an inadequacy in the existing legislation. Were Muhammad, peace be upon him, alive, he could of course successfully take to cour Rushdie and his publishers for blasphemous libel. But there are no provisions for protecting the sensibilities of individuals (or communities) whose self-esteem is linked to their respect for Muhammad, peace be upon him, and his ideals.

The issue here is not merely of equality under the law. For one way, popular with secularists, of attaining equality of treatment would be simply to abolish the law of blasphemy. That would, however, be cold comfort to Muslims: while removing the privileged position afforded to a Christian denomination, it would leave Muslims as unprotected as ever. Such a solution would rely on a drastic principle parallel in motivation to the impractical view that one way to solve all human problems is by exterminating the human race!

There are no doubt difficulties in extending the blasphemy law to protect the God of the Jews and Muslims as well as the Christians.

Neither inability to define blasphemy nor the presence of agreed difficulties in application of the proposed law is a sufficient reason for refusal to legislate in this area of sensibility. Virtually all areas of profound human concern arc the subject of keen disagreement but that fact alone does not deter us from making laws to regulate behaviour. There are arguments, sometimes intractable, about the precise definition of many offences; public and parliamentary debate can, however, jointly sort out the details once the underlying principles have been accepted. The fact that we cannot provide an uncontroversial definition of an offence can never be an adequate ground for abandoning the search for formulating proper legal restraint and the corresponding punishment.

It is important to know the purpose of law. Legislation cannot make us fully tolerant of one another. Those who hate Islam will, even under a tighter law, seek other means of abusing it. But the ability of human beings to evade even the most precise legal regulation is no reason for refusing to impose legal constraint. Law does not change the heart – but it does restrain the heartless. And that is already a great achievement.

will it do to entrust matters to the discretion of individuals hope that men and women can never be utterly insensitive of other's feelings. Arguments in favour of self-censorship political and ideological contexts, weak and implausible. It is unsurprising that we do not merely request racists to decreasor their literature. The law does it for them since the service to public in its consequences to be left purely to private with provided in the consequence with the c

The law may be a blunt instrument but we cannot do without is the context of the Satanic Verses affair there is an urgent and for an enactment to protect Muslim sensibilities against provocation. Whether or not the enactment involves neutension of the existing blasphemy regulations is really a and of detail. It may well be that, in a secular society like hum, the Muslim's best bet is to campaign for a law making minds of conduct or publication socially unacceptable as moved to religiously offensive. Lord Jakobovits, the Chief lith. has wisely counselled Muslims along these lines arguing taxone enactment should prohibit socially intolerable conduct ablated or likely to incite revulsion or violence by holding up deous beliefs to scurrilous contempt . . . (The Times, 4 March M Thus, for example, Muslims may contend that while while a revered but dead religious leader like Muhammad, marke upon him, need not be an indictable offence in a secular with such polemic could excite the anger of those citizens the self-image is created by reference to his ideals and lifestyle and hence may lead to a breach of the peace.

The Commission for Racial Equality has now established that the sare a distinct group of people bound together by a amon faith. The Race Relations Act does not, except in Ulster, and religion as a ground for discrimination; accordingly the apportunities policies of local authorities do not normally apprent it as a relevant determinant in service delivery. Yet, in the conformal of Muslims, the Satanic Verses saga has strongly indicated and determining the needs and aspirations of Muslims.

as race and gender in any proper interpretation of their self-identity. Unsurprisingly, the demands of Muslim communities cannualways be subsumed under the geographical category of Asian In fact, Asians often see themselves as religious groups in a Sikhs, Hindus, and Muslims. It is entirely reasonable to identify Muslims as a distinct group of people on grounds of their self-professed Islamic identity.

The Race Relations Act, therefore, needs amendment. Ethnicity cannot be the sole factor in identifying a group as a community with shared convictions. The Commission for Racial Equality has rightly viewed with sympathy attempts to classify Jews and Travellers as distinct groups. Why not Muslims?

#### Ш

'Freedom is not a holy belief, nor even a supreme value.' So wrote Michael Ignatieff in 'The Observer' of 2 April 1989. It is, he tells us, a contestable concept. Is it? To be sure, liberal thinkers would argue that all the central concepts of modern secular political theory are essentially contestable. Freedom, rights, power, democracy itself. Yet the behaviour of apologists for liberalism during the Rushdie affair gives the lie to the claim that they interpret freedom to be a negotiable value.

It is an axiom of democratic thought that the truth about the political world is not ascertainable in a final or absolute way-and that all men and women are fallible, not least those in positions of power and influence. Accordingly, individuals and groups with conflicting interests should properly discuss and negotiate solutions on the basis of enlightened self-interest. But there has been little evidence of any such reasoning in this affair. The notion of negotiating with these 'uncivilised' Muslims has been dogmatically rejected. It has indeed been a case of our 'light and sagacity' versus their 'darkness and obscurantism'.

It is the Muslims who have wished to remind liberals that freedom is indeed a contestable concept. The Muslims have plausibly argued that the issue is not the right to censure Islam for that right exists and is routinely exercised. The issue is whether or not any civilised society should tolerate, let alone encourage, writers to mock and insult the convictions of a major world

#### The Muslim Argument

mouncy. Does the secular clergy have the right to canonise of speech as an absolute value overriding all other what considerations?

The liberal fundamentalists have betrayed themselves. For the total principle of secular liberalism is that difference in ideologal posture, among groups and individuals should rarely if ever, and a restriction of human sympathies. Yet the powerless where burnt at the stake for defending their dignity as where.

his significant that the British Muslims' protest, with all its Americaness - only the rightless burn books and demonstrate athe streets - has elicited anger rather than sympathy. Could the that Islam challenges the moral absolutism of the liberal subthment setting itself up as the sole cultural overseer and mut of public taste and value? Even a purely rhetorical protest the British Muslims has galvanised the opposition; everyone is pathered together to warm themselves by the fire of Western Where is the negotiated compromise, the judicious namatism of a liberal democratic culture committed to rejecting aboniarian dictate and the passionate arrogance that allegedly anders' After the Satanic Verses episode, it is even harder to abrea faith in the humility of secular liberal postures of power. Perpoint is hugely significant. Islam is a salutary reminder of keed for political humility in secular statecraft. It is always a assumption of Western political theory that the posthis of political humility are exhausted by purely secular wares of power, yet the assumption is questionable. For it is was statecraft, not theocracy, that gave us Hiroshima and two lad (or rather European) wars. Some of the most incisive Tones of the abuse of power have come from the pen of those add by the hubris of secularity when it rejects any liability hos greater than itself. With so much talk of The Thought Muslim Fundamentalists' in the same breath, it is well member that Orwell's political masterpiece 1984 is a critique localitatianism in secular dress. Big Brother was not an stollah, not even an ordinary Muslim. The Liberal Inquisition Thought Police too.

IV

Freedom is more holy to liberals than Michael Ignatieff would have us believe. In fact, liberal society too holds certain shibboleths beyond rational debate. Some things do matter, and principles cannot be weighed in the scales of pragmatism or diplomacy. Yet if freedom of speech be a sacred or otherwise unnegotiable value for the liberal West, why shouldn't the question of Muhammad's, peace be upon him, honour have a similar status for the Muslim believers?

The Archbishop of York wrote in a letter to 'The Times' (I March, 1989) that abolishing the law of blasphemy would indicate that in the last resort our society holds nothing sacred, apart from the freedom of writers to write what they like. This is, for obvious reasons, attractive to writers . . . (but) . . . why should it have absolute priority over all other claims to sacredness? Fair question, surely; and one not to be answered by evasive liberal rhetoric about religious intolerance being particularly oppressive. Intolerance, no matter what its source, leads to oppression and denial of human rights. It is a prejudice, if a pardonable one, to think that the intolerance of those who make particularly loud professions of tolerance is to be preferred to the intolerance of those who don't.

Source: Impact International, 20/4, 23rd February-8th March 1990, pp. 9-11.

# The Rushdie Affair: A Muslim's Perspective

by Mushahid Hussain

Given the ferment among Muslims from Kosovo (in the Balkans) to Kashmir (in the South Asian subcontinent), there is a new drawing of battle lines, with the West fearful of a resurgent Islam. The Rushdie Affair remains an important element in the West versus Islam conflict. The uproar over what is seen by an overwhelming majority of Muslims as Rushdie's wilful act of

when needs to be examined from three aspects so that the armst conflict over *The Satanic Verses* is better understood. The issue of freedom of expression; second, what Muslims work as Western double standards; and, third, the political arts which defines the debate. A key component of this is approximate between Islam and the West rooted in history, culture of religion.

First freedom to speak or write or any freedom for that matter guer absolute, just as the freedom to use firearms is not would by law, in the case of the pen by libel, and In special constraints and other generally accepted norms of Hunour, and in the case of Muslim societies, by religion as well. for Muslims who profess to be its followers - of which Aman Rushdie presumably was one, at least by birth - is not startigion requiring observance of rituals on special occasions, 18 also a way of life. Islamic consciousness is in the marrow of Visions, It shapes their worldview, outlook and cultural patterns thehaviour. For Muslims, the centrality of their beliefs revolves round an unquestioned faith in the Koran, as a book of God adof the Prophet Muhammad as His Messenger, believed by being to be the only human being who is perfection personified. Every society has certain values which are sacrosanct. Western somes, since they are secular, accord less of a priority to religion tan is accorded to Islam by Muslims. The reaction, therefore, Balas Rushdie wrote was predictable, more so given the fact talk came from a Muslim background, was apparently aware the vitals of the religion he was born into, and could thus not k manage of the possible consequences of the use of his pen any his fellow Muslims. As far back as 1929, Ghazi Ilam Din, Malin from Lahore during the days of the Raj, killed a Hindu THE Rai Pal, who had ridiculed the Prophet Mohammad in a with the Rangeela Rasool (The Colourful Prophet). And who 18 the first to volunteer to be Ghazi Ilam Din's lawyer, despite bulke's proud public confession that he had killed 'for the and Islam'? The man was Mohammad Ali Jinnah, then the to temment of barristers in India, who was later to found the Me of Pakistan. It needs to be noted that Jinnah was a liberal \*\*\* with the Western political tradition and represented and lifestyle perhaps even more secular than his Hindu merpans. Ghazi llam Din later went to the gallows, an unrepentant but popular Muslim folk hero still remembered non as a shaheed (martyr). Even mainstream American newspaper, seemed shocked at Rushdie's malicious attack on all that is said to Muslims. The New York Times book review, in its issue of 20 January 1989 wrote: 'How are we to understand the adoption-by a writer born Muslim – of so defamatory a name for the Prophet of Islam?' The Washington Times review, published in its 13 February 1989 issue, was even more explicit: 'But having discovered no literary reason why Rushdie chose to portray Mohammad's wives as prostitutes, the Koran as the work of Satan and the founders of the faith as roughnecks and cheats, I had to admit to a certain sympathy with the Islamic leaders' complaints.'

The second aspect emerged from the edict of Imam Khomeini The Western response to this fatwa narrowed down to an expression of apparent shock and horror as if an apparently appalled West had never sponsored assassinations on foreign soil of selected political targets. Additionally, Imam Khomeini was represented as being alone or Iran-isolated within Islam on the question of this edict. Both these aspects are factually incorrect. On 16 March 1989 the Islamic Foreign Ministers Conference convened in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, endorsed the view earlier expressed by Imam Khomeini that Salman Rushdie is 'an apostate', the only difference being that it stopped short of imposing a punishment for his apostasy. Regarding the death sentence which Imam Khomeini had imposed on Rushdie, the Saudi Arabian Foreign Minister, Prince Saud al Faisal, said that the Islamic Foreign Ministers were not competent to do this since their conference was 'a political body and not an assembly of jurisprudents', adding that such a sentence was 'the job of theologians'. The Chief Saudi religious leader, Sheikh Abdul Aziz bin Abdullah bin Baz, for instance, recommended that Salman Rushdie be put on trial in absentia in a Muslim country for committing heresy.

Muslims are agreed that Rushdie has committed heresy; the only difference is on the most appropriate method to deal with this. One Muslim writer said: 'To Muslims, the integrity of their beliefs is more important than the national or territorial integrity of a modern state; the violation of this integrity represents an act of high treason deserving the harshest punishment. It is only against this background that the indignation of Muslims at this libellous book can be understood.'

What was galling to Muslims was the Western response to Imam khomeni's edict, as if the West had never condoned the taking of hie in pursuit of its own interests and for issues which are seen to be heng vital to the West. The table below lists the West's track record in pursuit of 'higher' goals like 'national security' and 'anti-terrorism'. This effectively debunks the attempt by the West to take the moral high ground on this issue vis-a-vis Islam by making the Rushdie Affair seem like a question of superior values, onlisation and way of life.

The third aspect is the political context which has deeply influenced the Western view on this debate. The Palestinian-American Professor Edward Said remarked in his 1980 study Covering Islam: 'I have not been able to discover any period in European or American history since the Middle Ages in which blam was generally discussed or thought about outside a tranework created by passion, prejudice and political interests'. Since the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979, a new Islamic identity ad consciousness has emerged among Muslims, which is both bibly politicised and radicalised. The West feels threatened by this new political expression of Islam. It is thus no accident that responsible, liberal' newspapers like The (London) Guardian can ule the liberty of dismissing Imam Khomeini as a 'bearded bastard", which it did in a November 1979 editorial. Rushdie is on one manifestation of the conflict between the West and Islam; tranges from resistance to the scarf for Muslim women in Europe, bossition to Turkey's entry into the 'European family' come 1992, or support for Gorbachev's use of force against Muslims in Authaijan as opposed to his peaceful pleading with the Christian wassionists in Lithuania. Attitudes, in large measure, are shaped by recent religious history, and the Western response to Rushdie 500 exception. In 1683 when the armies of Christian Austria sopped the military might of Muslim Turkey at the gates of Venna, Viennese bakers celebrated the defeat of the 'Infidels' by baking the croissant - shaped like a crescent, the Islamic symbol which was also the Turkish emblem. Today, the croissant is staple Menu at every Western breakfast table.

Attent episode during a meeting between Yasser Arafat and

Muslim ruler is instructive in this regard. While Arafat was

liking a Muslim country, he noticed that local television was

up government propaganda, particularly promoting the

personality cult of the corrupt autocrat. When Arafat complained to the ruler, asking why there was no mention of the Intifada of the Palestinians on their television, the ruler smilingly replied 'Do you want me to give ideas to my people on how to resist; regime and throw stones at the police?' More than anything else, this comment sums up the problem of Muslim countries: most have minority regimes, which do not reflect the aspirations of their own people. This is also one reason why some Western writers erroneously viewed the Rushdie Affair as a 'subcontinental issue'. No Arab country allows demonstrations by its people for fear that these may turn into rallies against the regime or the ruler, akin to what happened with the rally called by Ceausesou, which led to popular revolt.

Rushdie's writing The Satanic Verses is like a Jew who tries to justify the Holocaust, who defends Hitler's extermination of millions of Jews and dismisses his crime in light hearted humour at the expense of the victims of Auschwitz. No serious Western publisher would think such trash worthy of publication and certainly not worth a million dollar advance. Freedom of expression is not at issue in this case and it is time that Western intellectuals stopped pandering to the ego of a man who is callous enough to let more people suffer, even perhaps die, so that he continues to make money out of insulting a personality revered by a billion Muslims. John Le Carré summed up the issue in The Guardian: 'Nobody has a God-given right to insult a great religion and be published with impunity.'

#### The Muslim Argument

| Hotem countries' | officially-sponsored | violence, | on | foreign | soil, | of |
|------------------|----------------------|-----------|----|---------|-------|----|
| selected targets |                      |           |    |         |       |    |

| Dur Country Target |   | Ostensible reason   | Western response  |  |
|--------------------|---|---|---|--|
| 1960Brael          | Ex-Nazi Adolph<br>Eichmann<br>is kidnapped<br>in Argentina.   | War crimes against<br>Jews.                                     | Action hailed for bringing criminal to justice.   |  |
| 1985 USA           | CIA-planted<br>bomb fails to<br>kill Syed<br>Muhammad Hussein<br>Fazlullah, Lebanon's<br>Hizbullah chief. | Alleged role in terrorism.                                      | 'Much ado about<br>nothing'; 'part<br>of the game'.   |  |
| 1985 France        | French secret service agents sink Rainbow Warrior, ship of the anti-nuclear Green-peace movement.         | Interference in<br>French nuclear<br>tests in South<br>Pacific. | Condemnation by<br>New Zealand,<br>but no inter-<br>national<br>outrage.                                  |  |
| 1986 USA           | US planes bomb<br>Colonel<br>Qaddafi's<br>residence in<br>Tripoli, killing<br>hisdaughter.                | Qaddafi's alleged role in fermenting terrorism.                 | 'Disappointment'<br>at not killing<br>Qaddafi.  |  |
| 1968 Israel        | Israeli squad<br>kills PLO<br>military chief<br>Abu Jihad.  | Masterminding<br>Palestinian up-<br>rising.                     | Israeli<br>efficiency<br>acclaimed; act<br>of murder and<br>violation of<br>International<br>Law ignored. |  |

Continued

Alleged

'terrorists'.

No reaction

Source: Index on Censorship, 4/90, pp. 12-13.

# Your Satanic Majesty, Not Again!

#### by Syed Zafarudin Sayeed

In what seems to be Salman Rushdie's attempt at fence-mending with Muslims, the author of the infamous The Salanic Verses has actually hurled more offenses at his former co-religionists. The technique he has used is to arouse and exploit the moral sensibilities of his readers to promote his brand of morality. Mr. Rushdie's article in Newsweek (February 12) headlined "A Pen Against the Sword" makes one think of him as a saintly writer who is under brutal attack for writing a most ennobling work. The fact, however, is that through his morally depraved and perverted nature he has abused a pen and caused the death of at least 40 innocent Muslims around the world.

Anyone with some basic knowledge of human history would know that Muslims of the world are second to none in their appreciation of the pen and its role in history. But Muslims will never use that pen to unleash invectives on others. Islam inspires such a deep love and passion for the noble contributions of pen that the swords have become ineffective in frightening the Muslims. Throughout history, Muslims have preserved the interity of the pen even at the cost of their lives. In protesting the publication of Satanic Verses, the Muslims had a dual objective to defend the honor of the Prophet and his household and to express displeasure at the disgrace that Mr. Rushdie has brought on the pen.

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#### his Not an Issue of Freedom of Expression

Muslims have consistently stated that the writing or publishing The Solanic Verses has nothing to do with the rights of individuals in express themselves freely. In fact freedom of conscience and heedom of expression are among the most important and fundamental rights unconditionally guaranteed under Islam. And cerwhen it comes to societies where Muslims are in minority they can never advocate suppression of such freedoms. Thus the inempts to project Muslims as opponents of freedom of expression are a grave misrepresentation. While Islam promotes freedom of emession, it does not give any protection to acts of defamation, duracter assassination and blasphemy. The author of Satanic imes does not distinguish between what is normally understood whe freedom of conscience and freedom of expression and the ations that are offensive and insulting. In fact he asserts that heedom of expression is of no value without the freedom to offend and salinize. He says, "What is freedom of expression? Without he breedom to offend it ceases to exist. Without the freedom to dallenge, even to satirize all orthodoxies, including religious orthodoxies, it ceases to exist."

As a free man, Mr. Rushdie may interpret and exercise freedom depression the way he wants, but it is ridiculous on his part to qued Muslims not to respond to his satires and offenses.

#### his an Issue of Moral Responsibility

Censorship is practiced all over the world including Britain and the United States. And it is practiced by governments and private againsations. Any claims to contrary are simply absurd. Prof. Mazuri, for example, has cited numerous examples of such audicensorship while addressing the issues related to the Satanic limits at year. What Muslims have been asking for, and have the successful to some extent in getting is recognition and authorizing that writers and artists also have a moral and social isconsibility for their work. We have to continue our efforts and the tot shied away from challenges. History of Islam and Molins is filled with many examples in this regard. However, while the sum of t

abuse against Islam. Those who disregard these natural sensitivities of Muslims, are being unfair.

#### It is a Satanic Work

The entire debate about *The Satanic Verses* is very simple and straightforward. The author and his allies have claimed that *The Satanic Verses* is a sort of "masterpiece," "an excellent piece of literature," and "the work of an artist." What they have disregarded is the Muslim position that no one, including the writers and the artists, has the right to abuse Islam.

It should be understood by everyone that Muslims have a very special relationship with Islam. They live for it and they give their lives for it. The author is so arrogant that he refuses to listen to any voice except to his own. His irrationality is very persistent. For Mr. Rushdie and his likes the issues of morality, ethics, and social responsibility are of no value. Instead, they nurture elements of obscenity, pornography, vulgarity, and filth and present them as art and literature. Muslims on the other hand consider all such literature and art a satanic work.

Mr. Rushdie has shown us how irrational he is. On the one hand he uses the most sacred names in the history of Islam in a profane, filthy and obscene manner to amuse himself and his kind, and on the other, complains about "bigots and racists" who have tried to exploit his case by using his name to taunt Muslim and non-Muslim Asian children and adults in a manner that he finds "repulsive, defiling and humiliating." He does not seem to recognize that different people respond to such situations differently. There are some who ignore such things, others get upset and angry. There are those who react to it in the manner of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. Also, there are those who return a stone for a brick.

#### **Facilitating Profanity**

For the West's predominantly Christian, societies, the events of Reformation and Renaissance, the advent of industrial and technological revolutions, urbanization and freedom from monarchies and church domination have ushered in a drastically different socio-cultural era. Everything has changed to the extent that it

# The Muslim Argument

motto that God is "dead." Ethics and morality have meanings. In politics, economics, culture, and society meanings. In politics, economics, culture, and society with and matters is power. One reflection of these changes exact enlightenment era is the fact that profanity, obscenity, againly have become impossible to define. What might be expertent, obscene and vulgar to one might very strangely be and adorable, and ennobling to others. The Satanic Verses around by and admittedly a manifestation of this confusion. The strangely be and this full well, Mr. Rushdie and his supporters are telling as that profane and chaste, good and evil, and sacred and are relative. This is unacceptable to Muslims.

Rushdie and his publishers, Viking-Penguin, have to around that by making new charges against Islam and continuup promote the book, they are making a reconciliation with latest even more improbable.

in The Message International, March 1990, pp. 9-10.

# The Author as the Stooge

by M.H. Farugi

After having inflicted gratuitous insult to over 1,000 million sums of the world (even the liberal mouthpiece 'The Guardian' molessed roundly to this fact the other day in its 14 February 190 'Fatwa Anniversary' editorial), the 'celebrity' author of fragin Viking's classic sacrilege, 'The Satanic Verses', returned callet this month to offer a gratuitous explanation of his 'Good faith' (The Independent', 4 February 1990), that is gratuitous insofar as the Muslims were concerned, otherwise everything has been fully charged for. This particular essay, 'In Good Faith' was sold to the newspaper 'for close to £100,000'. There have been other interviews and paid-for excerpts and he has already made well over £1m' from his 'magnum profanicus'. Therefore whether or not 'The Satanic Verses' went into the paperback, there is little doubt that in a world dominated by a so-called Liberal minority,

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Mr. Rushdie and his publishers, Viking-Penguin, have to understand that by making new charges against Islam and continuing to promote the book, they are making a reconciliation with Medium even more improbable.

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there isn't going to be a shortage of money for writing sacrilege, more so if it concerned Islam and Muslims.

Right from the days of its pre-launch publicity to the latest protestation of 'Good Faith', Salman Rushdie, the former advertising agency jingle-writer has written his ad lib several times over generally gleeful and 'naughty', but sometimes also pretending to be 'nice', depending upon who he was speaking to Everyone knew the author of 'Grimus', 'Midnight's Children' and 'Shame' to be a writer of fiction, a novelist, but the story-teller now wanted to promote himself as a 'social reformer'. Thus we find him telling the Indian magazine 'India Today' (15 September 1988) that 'Actually one of my major themes (emphasis ours) is religion and fanaticism' and that he had 'talked about the Islamic religion because that is what I know the most about'. (Did he not then know how seriously 'the Islamic religion' took offence to abusing or insulting Muhammad, peace be upon him? It was apostasy and apostasy was punishable with death. One assumes he knew that, despite the 'God-shaped hole' in his hollow cardiac machine Instead he had chosen deliberately to seek 'reform' through outrage.)

Rushdie was yet more eloquent when he spoke to another Indian magazine. He told 'Sunday' weekly (18-24 September 1988) that the book 'is a serious attempt to write about religion and revelation from the point of view of a secular person. Why pick on Muhammad (peace be upon him) alone to insult and ridicule him, when the professed aim is 'serious' and the supposed canvas broad and universal, not confined to Islam and Muslims alone! Because 'Muhammad (peace be upon him) is a very interesting figure. He's the only Prophet (peace be upon him) who exists even remotely inside history', Rushdie went on to explain his choice. Totally oblivious of the possibility that his secular crusade could turn out to be a non-starter even in a secular India, he was then priming the world's largest English-reading market after North America. India was the first country to ban 'The Satanic Verses', but Rushdie went on with his actor-sloganwriter-novelist and 'Islamic reformer' act in the British radio and television programmes produced for the 'Indo-Pakistanis'. He wanted to be taken more seriously than a mere Highbury yarn-weaver, Jolaha in his Indo-Anglian tongue. It was only later when faced with worldwide condemnation that he had to think migration, metamorphosis, divided selves, love, death'.

And than meaning to outrage Muslims he was trying to applies with their lot as immigrants, he was now saying, a point from the interior in the Guardian'.

Emathy? Even Malise Ruthven's passionate defence of Salman indict (A Satanic Affair: Salman Rushdie & The Rage of Islam, Jano & Windus, London, 1990) could not fail to state that

yourd critics have sensed a lack of empathy in Rushdie's galment of traditionally disadvantaged groups.' He quotes Inothy Brenan: 'The book's characterisation of West Indians the its characterisation of women) are often embarrassing and Ansne (Salman Rushdie and the Third World: Myths of the London, 1989.) Ruthven refers further to Feroza Juscomment ('Resurrecting the Prophet: The Case of Uman, the Otherwise' in Public Culture, Vol 2, No 1, Fall 1989, Mil that Rushdie's British education makes him "condescendgetoall things Indian", 'yet Ruthven, tries to show understand-Empathy in fiction, however, comes more readily with the rounded characters and 'since Rushdie's thesis mean to be that the migrant's experience leads to the discarding ad assuming of identities, to create "rounded" characters would with be false to method . . . ' What Ruthven is saying is that brais 'method', it was difficult for Rushdie to create 'rounded' anders. But the 'difficulty' was of his own making and, the in remained that Rushdie looked to all 'traditionally disadvanand groups' including women, with condescension, if not dually contempt. That much about his empathy with Muslims m immigrants.

Richde accuses his critics of not reading his book. He is lucky to only the Muslims happen to have, of necessity, read his large to have the chinese, the 'West Indians', the Sikhs, a findus, nor the English! ... Given the media hype and the latter it was regarded as offensive by Muslims, for sure great people have bought the book but were unable to read this dense pages of 'magic realism', making 'The Satanic latter probably 'one of the least read best-sellers in literary lates of yout the probably they had read it, unlike Muslims, they would steel long ago on the advice of Lord Dacre, the historian,

Professor Hugh Trevor-Roper, 'to waylay him in a dark street and seek to improve . . . Rushdie's manners.'

Salman Rushdie's long 7,000-words, £100,000 price-tag 'essay', is an interesting study material about the person and psychological condition of its author, though the material must be read and interpreted very carefully, in view of the fact that its writer was not a free person: He was hostage of his benefactors and beneficiaries. Not surprisingly, he has said little new and one doubts that even if he were to repent sincerely, in the Islamic sense of 'Tawba', he would have the freedom to make it known.

Most of the points Rushdie makes by way of explanation are mere elaborations on his previous polemic, and these were dealt with in *Impact* 18:20, 28 October–10 November 1988. Only that, he now combines the argument about his empathy for migrants with the more profound social and ideological objectives. He still does not want to say that 'The Satanic Verses' is 'only a novel' and thus need not be taken seriously'. That would be too humiliating for his ego, perhaps. He wants it to be taken as 'a work of radical dissent.'

The problem is he wants to have it both ways. He did not want to nor was he capable of writing a serious and scholarly work of radical critique of the 'Islamic religion'. Had he done so, criticisms or disputations about the book would not have been known outside the pages of Islamic or Orientalist journals. But he would have also not received all that fabulous 'auction' money that he got otherwise. He would not have entered the pages of history. So he chose the medium of fiction, the garb of dream and fantasy, but the language of filth and profanity. The device was clever and disarming as none of its potential critics could answer back its filth and profanity in the same language. It also won the acclaim of the large and powerful worldwide constituency of Islam haters, the so-called liberals and the alienated literati included.

The book was welcomed as a Devil-sent gift capable of destabilising the nascent Muslim communities in the West as well as the English-reading young generation in the Muslim countries. Whatever may be Rushdie's own explanation – and he has yet to offer a logical and consistent explanation – the point came out in almost all the major reviews of the book: That here was a 'brilliant' son of Islam who had come up with such a 'devastating' ridicule of the 'Islamic religion' and its two unassailable authenticities.

(u'an and Muhammad (peace be upon him) – something of Islamologist (as the former Orientalists have christened or date to do.

Ruthven approvingly describes 'The Satanic Verses' as playful, transgressive work that explores and parodies with neglected so Indo-British Muslim identity, mixing fact of the neglective etc. The integrity of the Sensitive as nihis brittle collective ego: the integrity of the Qur'an, the many of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and arms. the Mothers of the Believers (may God be pleased with proposition of the book: offensive to Muslims and pleasing to the and alienated liberals and all those who were motivated that the later towards Islam and Muslims.

leable's protestation of 'Good Faith' was, however, irrelevant station oncerns. They were neither asking nor expecting any station from him. Their demands were addressed to Penguin sats sho they assumed were a respectable and responsible stational publishing house. The author was just an individual stational publishing house, but for the publishers to spread it and sacnlege was not acceptable.

Ne Muslim demands were, therefore, addressed in the first are Penguin Books and these were:

Die, to withdraw and pulp all the copies of 'The Satanic Verses' allowed trake not to reprint it in the future.

in.to offer unqualified public apology to the World Muslim

lite, to pay damages to a Muslim charity equal to the returns and from the copies already sold in Britain and abroad.

her being no law to seek proscription of the book or any trigal redress against this gross sacrilege, the British Muslim and have concerns from some of total rightlessness, but in absolute confidence about hard justness of its cause and in the well-placed hope that habe to understand and appreciate their sense of hurt and have needful redress and recompense.

this has not happened so far is understandable. Being a amived - or more exactly 'brought over' - community to the manpower shortage in the lower and unpopular

scale of economic activity, it has yet to find its place as of its new country. It also faces a great degree of invasion its culture and way of life, an ignorance which is companied by factors of historical prejudice as by the proposition of what has best been described by Shake as 'Laberal Inquisition'.

Then there is the media which is, more often the as interested in making up a 'good story', than in far impact. it through a little 'editing', distortion or through process. a complete blackout of the Muslim point of the Alles been happening while the whole debate is alleged to be in defence of the doctrine of freedom of expression. The Management of the doctrine of freedom of expression. in Bradford were little aware that while choosing to warden burn a copy of 'The Satanic Verses' in January last were to be attention to their deep hurt they were also being manipulate a national newspaper. Burning books, flags or effice or effice or much part of popular and lawful methods of protest in the 'liberal' tradition. As Keith Vaz, Labour MP for Lenette S has pointed out ('The Guardian', 14 February 1990), meles Nicholas Ridley was burned in Hampshire by these opposite over-development, and poll tax notices were burned in Section A copy of the 1988 Immigration Act was burned outside the Office in August 1988, a month before the publication of its Satanic Verses'. There was no fuss about any of that, he has 'book-burning' in Bradford was turned into a 'cardinal of a used as an excuse to bash Bradfordian and all other Man communities as if it were they who had committed National albeit against the liberal secular 'religion'.

So the Muslims have still to go a long way towards recognition of their human rights and the right to equal demands they will not, but nothing diminishes their right to being abused and insulted. In the end bad manners and diminish the insulter.

In standing up to more than one year of strident and make campaign of abuse and intimidation, the Muslim community Britain has made enormous gains in self-esteem and make consciousness of the dignity of Islam and Muhammad peak upon him). Its young generation, its school boys and grice were the primary target of 'The Satanic Verses' for secularization de-Islamisation have acquired great confidence and constitutions.

As far as the book is concerned it may be seen because of the strong protests by a might even go on to touch another theroughly obserdised. Muslims were seen and not because they felt the book their faith. In the event they have learnt are may be Christian in its feelings and the country were dominated by a secular minerity. It is not assumed though that against Islam and Islamic sensitivities are mediate future, but then you are insulted

They seem to enjoy the notoriety achieved to the feel confident that their liberal and secular with a confident that their liberal and secular to the feel confident that their liberal and secular to the feel confident that their liberal and secular to the feel confident that their liberal and secular to the feel confident that their liberal and secular to the feel confident that their liberal and secular to the feel confident that their liberal and secular to the feel of the feel o

have the been quite smart in choosing for themselves the mile and faunting the naive author to take all the flak also the long his neck. Salman Rushdie should thank Fatwa and beloing him to slip away from Muslim leaders in Britain had made it that their demands were the subishers and publishers alone and told the and to try to touch the author of 'The Satanic Verses' and took were way Rushdie and his book were and sed to bash and beat the Muslim community, to was not improbable that someone and must to try to take the law into his own hands. the true import of the Fatwa the law about abusing the Prophet (peace be upon in the image apostasy and to underscore the enormity the publication of the book - the Of late a new element appears to have entered the situation. With Mrs Margaret Thatcher running into trouble with the country's liberal and money lobby, 'The Satanic Verses' affair seems to have come handy to serve as a useful whip to flog Mrs Torture' and to destabilise her. Also because, of late, the government had appeared to be trying to distance itself gradually from its earlier uncritical support of Rushdie and Penguin to write as they like and to publish as they like. Yet so powerful is the pressure exerted by the 'Friends of Penguin' that Mrs Thatcher had to assure the Commons last week that she defended the freedom of speech and the freedom to write in a democracy although the dispute here was not about the freedom of speech, it was about the abuse of this freedom to inflict insult and sacrilege upon a whole community of people.

The Penguin lobby is powerful and unassailable and as the publishers continue to bask in their intransigence, there is little hope of the deadlock being broken early, unless Rushdie tries to take his affairs into his own hands and refuses to act as a shield for Penguin Books. He has already stated that he is 'not a Muslim' and this might help him escape the charge of apostasy, even if he were to come under the jurisdiction of Islamic law. All he needed now was to show repentance, ask his publishers to cease further publication of 'The Satanic Verses' and to pay to an Islamic chanty all the gains of his sacrilege. After all he did admit in his last month's review of Thomas Pynchon's new novel, 'Vineland', in 'The New York Times Book Review' that there were things which 'are unfortunately, unprintable here.' He was referring to 'Billy Barf's "Three-Note-Blues" called "I'm a Cop" with lyrics that

the unprintable part of the lyrics, he refrained from the in his review. Why can't he use the same sense about 'The Satanic Verses'?

International, 20/4, 23rd February-8th March 1990, pp. 16-18.

The Rushdie Malaise: A Critique of Some Writings on the Rushdie Affair

by Ziauddin Sardar

I

leare the truth, all else is falsehood. This is the basic premise the civilization that dominates the world - the Western nization. It is the driving force of its history, its organizing mode secularism, and all its literary products. What it actually was a that Western perception is used as a yardstick to measure Western culture becomes the culture into which all other thus must be subsumed; Western history becomes the history. Absones of all other people, cultures and civilizations are only Internodern version of European history and therefore only a segment of the Grand History of Western Civilization; warm becomes the value of society to which all other values me refer; and Western art and literature present the apex of expenence in front of which all else pales into insignifi-Kenneth Clarke's book and the television series based on samed up the logic of this enterprise: Civilization. It began the Greeks and ended with modern Britain: nothing else speed in the middle, there has been and is nothing of Mance in the world since it began except the European and

# A Post-Modernist Novel With a Specific Purpose

Salman Rushdie's The Satanic Verses is a postmodernist novel It is therefore cast in a specific mould and is designed to serve a very specific purpose. Ridicule of Islam, abuse of the Prophet Muhammad and accompanying blasphemy are only surface offences - a residue of the Orientalist tradition. The novel has a deeper significance which has been meticulously worked out over five years. The postmodern genre of magical realism, of which Rushdie is an exponent, aims at turning history into amnesia: it deliberately and systematically blurs the boundaries of fact and fiction. This is done with the aim of proving and showing that reality is often imagined and imagination often becomes real. In a reductionist sense, the novel can be seen as the fictional form of Marxist theorist Jean Baudrillard's theory of semulacurum (the word actually appears in the novel a couple of times): television is not what you see in a box at one corner in the living room, that is reality; you, the viewer, are the image. The world turned upside down where 'Dynasty' and 'Dallas' are the real thing and our imitative behaviour of the soap opera the celluloid image. Rushdie painstakingly rewrites every aspect of the Sirah, the life of the Prophet Muhammad, the paradigm of Muslim behaviour and identity, and seals it in his own, postmodernist, dogmatic secularist, image. The hope is that his image of the Sirah will become the actual reality, and our perception, however historically accurate, the image. If his readers accept his picture, then Rushdie accomplishes the following goals: he makes the foundations of Islam a secularist enterprise and therefore part of the Grand History of secularism; he wipes out the deep and intrinsic connection between Muslim cultural and religious identity and the Prophetic paradigm, therefore making Islamic culture and Muslim identity an appendage to Western culture; and finally, as a result of these, he succeeds in writing Islamic history and Muslim identity - at least in the minds of his Western readers at whom the book is largely aimed - out of existence. This is the real purpose of The Satanic Verses.

Rushdie's novel is meant for people who, like him, have a God-shaped hole in their heart. It is aimed at a postmodern world where doubt and confusion, dark pessimism, loneliness, and absolute meaninglessness is the norm. In the best tradition of post-modernist literature it is a panic book, a product of panic

And void, panic ideology, panic sex, and panic culture. All whatevers are desperate people living desperate lives — an short he author's own desperation! Rushdie aims to produce puth between him and his reader and thus show that Islam, should had its scripture too suffer from the same malaise. As not his characters in the novel asks, in a state of desperate you and confusion: 'Does a firm persuasion that a thing is so, and us?' What the Muslims say is the historical reality of the now of their world-view does not make it so; what I, Rushdie, along with my doubts and panics so similar to yours, my raths, must surely be of much more significance!

Rushdie 'plays the role of court satirist too well'. However, to his assumed burden of writing Islam out of history and meeting a 'linear progress of history' which ends with Western miliation is no joke. Indeed, he even takes his role as a prophet (postmodernism very seriously and systematically gives clues in moves to show that he considers himself to be on a par with to hophet Muhammad: 'thus, as history records, Muhammad us about forty years old when his revelations began; so now is Rushdie, and so is his character, Gibreel Farishta. Like Rushdie, Whammad was not only a seer, but a social agitator, substituting alposs brotherhood for the tribal identities of the Arab peoples; at his attack on pagan worship was a direct threat to the mercial enterprise set up around the pilgrimage to the pagan lita, just as Rushdie in the novel continues the critique beloped in Midnight's Children where religion is portraved as 1 good business arrangement"."

he kind of goals that Rushdie sets himself could only be complished in a work of fiction. Muslims, of all people, as their way demonstrates so vividly, are aware of the power of ideas. The may or may not move mountains; but ideas certainly do, secularly when they are transformed into literature or technology for then they can be turned into ideologies, bulldozers, tools appression, physical and psychological torture and used to appression, physical

S Civility

#### The 'Brown Sahib'

That Rushdie is an Indian/Pakistani Muslim is also significant It gives his voice certain authenticity and eager listeners waiting to have their perceptions confirmed become even more ready to be convinced: he is one of them, surely he must know what he is talking about! Indeed, Rushdie takes considerable care to provide his readers with flavours of 'authentic culture' - the names of his characters, the predominance of local lingo, generous use of Urdu/Hindi terms. All this makes his narrative appear authentic. . . . The paradox returns again and again: Rushdie's work is in 'an aesthetic double-bind: an encyclopaedic frenzy, a narrative canvas packed with the colours and gestures of human "stuff". and yet set within a horrifying narrative closure'; 'despite the fresh thinking about national form, about a new homelessness that is also a wordliness, about a double-edged post-colonial responsibility, The Satanic Verses shows how strangely detached and insensitive the logic of cosmopolitan "universality" can be': and why, oh why, is there so much 'real history in Rushdie's work?' . . .

However, for most Muslims there is nothing paradoxical here. Rushdie is an instantly recognizable historic type, the 'brown sahib' who is at once an insider and a total, alien, outsider. The history of the Indian subcontinent is punctuated with the activities of so many brown sahibs who, in exchange for recognition and acceptance, always tried to out-do the sahib at his own pame After all, would the East India Company have succeeded in taking over the Mughal Empire with such ease if it had not had at its disposal a network of brown sahibs ever ready to sell their people short for this or that favour? . . . The brown sahib has an acute inferiority complex about his original identity: he hates his Indian/Muslim self. Yet, on the other hand, he knows he can never be accepted as a pukkah sahib. Thus a distance grows between himself and his identities and he experiences a loss of meaning and reality which manifests itself in desolution, desperation and internal panic. The belief that one's personality can always undergo fundamental change can only produce an epidemic of self-blame. And just like that postmodern manifestation of an old disease, herpes, which no matter how hard you scratch irritates more and more, this self-blame takes the brown sahib to his logical end: in a final suicidal attempt to become what he can never

the eradicates the one thing that can save him from the companity, his original identity. He thus fulfils the ultimate of the sahib by going the distance that even the sahib would subtant to go. In more ways than one, *The Satanic Verses* is also and tortuous suicide note.

the fact that postmodern pathological symptoms of are so strongly ingrained in Rushdie, it was natural for a lo become a brown sahib spokesperson for the Left. In Am times, just as knowledge is largely manufactured, in its eistation as science, technology, disciplines (economics, aday, anthropology, Orientalism), so is literature. Novelists gemade, processed and manufactured; gone are the days when meless were born as novelists and wrote from life experience much the lives of others: Cervantes, Flaubert, Henry James. hadays they are nursed, produced, packaged as commodities when necessary presented as spokespersons for this or that are But not everyone can queue up to be manufactured. Only extent few with the right Oxbridge background who totally and with Europe and its culture and promote the cause of Suprean civilization in their work - you must totally conform the dictates of militant dogmatic secularism. Under these and and are it is not pursuit of literature as a tool for moral and wik uplift of people that persuades writers to become profesand novelists, but the oldest motives of all: power and money.

But once you have entered the Star Chamber there are a when of privileges to be had. In these postmodernist times, tinue occupies the same place as God in traditional worldand the novelist is the high-priest of society. When Rushdie within it is to literature that I turn to fill the God-shaped hole who me' he was not just describing his own mental condition, hatso stating an accepted 'truth' of postmodernism. As demi-1th members of the Star Chamber yield tremendous power they defend their role as guardians of public morality Messly, Rushdie wrote The Satanic Verses in the full knowledge his Star Chamber status will ensure that the secularist whishment will rush to protect and defend him. Indeed, the Rushdie is the defence of the privileged status of the Modernist novelist in society: if the group of omnipotent/helpdidien with weak egos and socially distorted superegos who therally acknowledged to be the literati are seen to surrender



one inch of their territory, then the position of every one of them will be compromised. Rushdie therefore had to be defended with all the might at their disposal – even if it meant sinking into unadulterated racism.

#### Documentation of the Affair

Both The Rushdie File (edited by Lisa Appigananesi and Sara Maitland, Fourth Estate, London, 1989) and The Kiss of Judas (edited by Munawar Ahmad Anees, Quill, Kuala Lumpur, 1989) provide us with a good sample of writings of Rushdie's defenders. While the File gives more weight to his defenders, not surprisingly. Judas contains more from the Islamic perspective. The File contains no editorial comments, it simply allows the weighted bias towards the defenders and Rushdie's own interviews and comments, to make its case. Munawar Anees gives his editorial perspectives in Judas and thus plays his subjectivity up front. The File was designed to have a limited life – which it has now outlived Judas will last much longer not least because it contains Ali Mazrui's brilliant defence and Manazir Ahsan's scholarly examination of the origins and validity of the satanic verses incident.

#### A Defender of Rushdie

Neither of the anthologies contain Fay Weldon. Her pamphlet 'Sacred Cows' started life as an 'Opinion' on Channel Four entitled 'Sackcloth and Ashes' (March 1989) and was later printed in The Listener (18 May 1989), New Statesman and Society. The Observer and a slightly modified form as a Chatto CounterBlast (Chatto & Windus, London, 1989) - it is certainly good to see that certain individuals have a more than equal opportunity to exercise their freedom of expression. Here I have used the text of her 'Opinion' piece delivered direct to camera; it brings out her true personality and well illustrates the nature of postmodernist fiction. Weldon begins by announcing that 'we [have] failed to take relevant facts on board, we were frightened of rethinking What are the facts that she wants to take on board, and what rethinking is she asking for? Here is the first 'fact': Muslims believe that words are dangerous things in themselves, able to insult and by insulting destroying the God.' For a novelist 10

that words do not have any power is daft; but then to go ungest further that Muslims are so stupid that they think words will destroy God is to reveal a dumbfounding which we will destroy God is to reveal a dumbfounding with which we will destroy God is to reveal a dumbfounding with which will destroy God is to reveal a dumbfounding with which will be will destroy on the same that it is a their history no with which will be wi

that the Christians', she asks, 'not read the Koran? Do they stow how the believer in Mohammad regards the unbeliever?' utilish then produces this 'verse' from the Qur'ān: 'When the advact holds out his hand, take it. But when he turns his at slay him. You have my authority'. This 'verse', of course, and fabrication; an indication of the level to which postmoder-wideleders of Rushdie will sink to promote hatred. We about:

Itecommend a thorough reading of the Koran to everyone. Allah the all-seeing, all-knowing, I am glad to see, is compassionate as well as vengeful; that is to say, he does conclimes turn a blind eye, knowing people are weak; he score rescues people from the abysmal fires of Cehenna I just want to know what Allah has to be merciful about, what there is to forgive. It is, from the Western view, an entirely circular argument. Muhammad invents the sin in order for Allah to be seen forgiving it. To punish and chastise the norm: compassion is when it doesn't happen.

benefrom the perspective of the undoubtedly superior Western the perspective of the undoubtedly superior Western there is no contradiction between being compassionate and while if Allah is indeed vengeful; Allah, if He chooses, can impassionate in His vengeance and forgive. By any logic, if the vertical He is a de facto God. He exists because He exists; not we have willed Him into existence. The argument is only in the sense that Allah should have instituted a superior process, with Weldon as the chief advisor and before He takes revenge on anyone. But what is this:



Muhammad invented sin? Is one to understand Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Zoroastrianism and other religions before

Islam did not have the concept of sin?

The Qur'an that Weldon read 'comes in a very nice Penguin edition. Arthur Arberry did this translation. The Penguin edition of the Qur'an, if Weldon actually read it, is translated by N.J. Dawood, and it is one of the most inaccurate, misleading and distorted versions on the market (and the preferred choice of Salman Rushdie). The Arthur Arberry translation comes in a nice Oxford University Press (who hold the copyright; the American edition is published by Macmillan, 1979) edition: it looks so different from the Penguin edition that one would have to be virtually blind to confuse the two. Arberry's translation, Weldon tells us, 'moved him. So it should; it is a great poem'. But Weldon is not willing to allow Arberry, who spent his entire life studying the Qur'an and Muslim traditions and is considered, both by Muslims and non-Muslims, to be one of the great Orientalists of recent times, the freedom to be influenced by the Qur'an. Her interpretation is far superior; it has to be! So she throws scorn and sarcasm at Arberry's feelings: 'he acknowledges his gratitude to whatever power, or Power, inspired the man and the Prophet who first recited these scriptures - revelations supernaturally received, he explains'. Like all knowledgeable persons, Arberry is far more humble.

After deriding Arberry, Weldon quotes Sūrah Al-Kāfirūn (The Unbelievers' – 109: 1–6):

Say: O unbelievers, I serve not what you serve, and you are not serving what I serve, nor am I serving what you have served, neither are you serving what I serve. To you your religion and to me my religion!

And she adds, in the usual scornful manner: 'Oh yes. Except for me, the unbeliever, mine shall be the fire of Gehenna, and its mighty chastisements will never be lightened.' Had Weldon actually read Arberry's interpretation of the Qur'ān, she would have known that the Qur'ān does not promise paradise to the believer without corresponding action. Indeed together with belief (imān) it is righteousness and good action ('amal al-Ṣaiā)

usthe Qur'an wants; and the righteous unbelievers, unless they gay Weldon, need not worry about Gehenna too much. The and which is translated by Arberry as 'serve' (mā ta'budūn) is bet both to positive concepts and false objects of worship and class amongst the latter is a person's belief in his/her own chufficency and superiority, considering one's ignorance to be grenor knowledge, spreading fitna or hatred by false accusation and muendoes about other people, seeking to suppress or immate others and the attribution of superhuman and divine whites to human beings. On all these counts, Weldon has roothing to worry about!

The verse quoted by Weldon (109: 1-6) are a supreme example the live and let live attitude of the Qur'an. But Weldon's autonomen is to sow the seeds of conflict and distrust and vent

ber fear and hatred of Muslims:

this violent frightening poem . . . This divine revelation from Allah to Muhammad in the seventh century, with its bible tales retold, its rules for desert living, its rejection of monogamy, its despisal for women – yes, I know the Prophet says treat females with kindness and respect, and I dare say it was better than what went before – only chastise them when they're rebellious, and so forth; and the women go to haven too, but since heaven is a place full of beautiful houris and glasses of wine beneath the bough, what are the women to do? Fetch the wine, I suppose. See how awful one gets, socasily, about another culture's belief structure . . . (Amen!)

Why have billions of Muslims who have lived since the beginning dlam, including non-Muslims like Arberry, not been frightened by this violent and frightening poem? How come it led to the ration of one of the greatest material and intellectual civilizations on the one hand, and an unparalleled tradition of mysticism who other? There is fear and there is violence; but it is not in the message of the Qur'an. The fear is within the heart and mind of Fay Weldon: the fear of her own ignorance, her inner that the state of the outcome of her intrinsic fear and hatred, her urge to dominate, her arrogant belief in her own self-righteous, supertrossion – violence is what she has done to the Qur'an by the presentation, plain falsification, and downright ignorance.

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And some poem! At any one single space-time co-ordinate, it is in the hearts, minds and memories, cover to cover, of millions of people who can recite all of it, or any part from anywhere to anywhere. A poem whose segments are recited, and have been recited for fourteen hundred years, five times a day by most devout Muslims. A poem that led Ibn Haytham to lay the foundations of modern optics and Rumi to the apex of mystical ecstasy. A poem that can build or destroy empires. A poem that can shape the social structure of a society, build economic systems and construct political institutions. A poem that is a religion, a civilization, a culture, a world-view. How many poems are there like it? Or perhaps our processed feminist novelist does not know what a poem is?

#### **Dogmatic Secularist**

To say that the Qur'ān despises women is like saying that Fay Weldon despises Salman Rushdie. In either case it is a total distortion of fact. Even when the Qur'ān says 'men' it applies equally to women. But it is also a fact that in contemporary Muslim societies, women are discriminated against and suppressed. That discrimination and suppression is not due to the teachings of the Qur'ān, but the chauvinism and arrogance of Muslim men. It is an appalling state of affairs that cannot and should not be tolerated, and that has to be fought at every juncture by all right-minded people. First Weldon states, with a sense of original discovery, that Muslim women are harassed and suppressed; then she argues that rates of divorce, wife-beating etc. among Muslims in Britain are somehow way ahead of the more 'liberated host community:

Muslim women in our midst, with their arranged marriages, their children in care, their high divorce rate, the wife beatings, the intimidation, the penalties for recalcitrance... their unregulated work in Dickensian sweatshops, abandoned and betrayed, as they try to keep house and home together, the impossibly exploitative piece-work at home...

Why did Weldon leave out child abuse, rape, homicide, alcoholism, and drug addiction? One hopes that Muslims are not being favoured! If the champion of dogmatic secularism had

her facts, she would have discovered that in purely the terms, there is simply no comparison between the state, children in care, wife-beating and so on in the Muslim and the host community. In Britain, one in three sends in divorce; and second marriages are as likely to the state of the state of the state of the sends in divorce; and second marriages are as likely to the state of the sends o

The mosque', Weldon announces, 'where the Muslim children every day after school - often frightened of going, I am told workers, but there is no escape for them - to be taught Koran' But who are these 'social workers'? Are they the Renguin who published Arberry? If Muslim children do go 1th mosque every day - a luxury many Muslim communities not have because there are not enough mosques, enough and, enough teachers - they may be upset about missing leabours or East Enders or playing football, but why should in beafraid? And if they are afraid, are they more afraid than a dild going to school every morning? Most Muslim children and Sunday schools, which are organized sometimes in mosques alsometimes in other community centres, where they learn not with Our an, Islamic history and Muslim culture, but also get whed in debates and discussions, sports and learn such things harate which may come in handy when dealing with those who on shoving their self-righteous superiority down their aroats

Weldon's attack on Islam continues, she says she would be wend if she were a child being taught the Qur'ān, because war in stipulates that only a believer can escape hell-fire. She would this pressurized fear as the reason 'why, when we in kest try to engage even the most intelligent and sophisticated in conversation about these matters, we find a blank wall incomprehension. Terror intervenes'.

there are intelligent and sophisticated Muslims after all, though they have been frightened out of their wits by the has it not occurred to her that the 'blank wall of

Sus Civility

non-comprehension' may be a reaction to the lethal fusion of sheer arrogance and ignorance on her part, that it is not the Muslims' minds that are closed but hers? They can comprehend people who do not believe, but can she comprehend people who do believe? A closed mind perceives all other minds to be closed, it can do nothing else. And that 'frightened child' who 'looks out of the adult's eyes'. Muslims are really like children: slap them and tell them to shut up and sit down.

#### **Demigod of Public Morality**

While the Muslims are child-like and immoral, evil and hateful. indeed totally black, Salman Rushdie himself is an adult, moral good, full of love and totally white. Islam 'is not a religion of kindness but of terror'; and the Qur'an, in another of her vicious fabrications, 'gives the believer permission to hate the unbeliever'. The Satanic Verses on the other hand, is a novel of love and goodness, is extraordinary poetry, which does not give permission to hate and is the stuff of revelation. The author, an 'ex-colleague of mine in an advertising agency, is too human, too modern, too witty, too intelligent, to lay down rules for the human race.... Too human? Surely, a slip of the tongue? He soars high above ordinary mortals. He is, surely, God incarnate, not the child-like son but the Father himself: 'as a piece of writing, The Salanic Verses reads pretty much like the works of St. John the Divine at the end of our own Bible . . . St. Salman the Divine'. 'I'm ioking', she adds with a smirk. A joke? Surely not, Ms. Weldon? Do you not have the conviction of your belief? Let us pray: Our Father who art in hiding, forgive us our sins that we are upset and angry by your ridicule and abuse and postmodernist attempts to write us out of history . . .

Weldon – who is an archetype of intellectually sterile and barren, emotionally panic-stricken and infantile, postmodernist novelists who see themselves as demi-gods of public morality-and other defenders of Rushdie (who are examined in some detail in my book, co-authored with Merryl Wyn Davies, Distorted Imagination: Postmodern Lessons from the Rushdie Affair, Grey Seal, London, 1990) operate in the firm conviction that Muslims are fair game. If, for example, she had said the same things about Jews or Blacks or even homosexuals, she would be, in no uncertain

drawn and quartered, taken to court, and hounded out of your Chamber. But this assumption is partly valid: Muslims in game insofar as they are powerless; but intellectually they make on anyone that postmodernists can throw at them and them to pulp.

One thing that is totally irrelevant in the Rushdie affair is Salman Rushdie himself. What is of concern is the component enterprise of secularizing the world and subsuming ather cultures, and its latest, most obnoxious, literary product: 11, Solonic Verses. The Muslim protest, in Britain and throughout world, has shown that this enterprise will face serious extance from the world of Islam. However, to go beyond regiance we need to understand the nature and goals of dogmatic autensm, particularly in its postmodernist variation; only then as we dismantle it brick by brick and render it harmless. In this of ideas, with the very survival of Muslims as Muslims at cute we need to make sure that we do not fall victim to the dues of postmodernist techniques: that we do not react with bit and panic, abuse and ridicule, meaningless violence and unor self-satisfying slogans and righteous indignation. It is only atheintellectual level that the advance of the postmodern culture doubt in its new phase of self-glorification can be bled and its exponents persuaded to keep off the territory that mides Muslims, as well as other cultures, with identity and coming, It is going to be a long, hard, war and we might as well stledown and prepare ourselves for coming battles. Meanwhile, te shost of the Rushdie affair will become a new permanent thur of the postmodern scene. Ever present, it will haunt the Islem literati till the final moments of their panic-stricken, reaingless, barren and lonely lives, while keeping Muslim utilectuals on their toes and on the look out for the next althectual onslaught.

have Muslim World Book Review, 10/3, 1990, pp. 3-17.

#### II

h'ls Nothing Sacred?', his Herbert Read Memorial Lecture with by Harold Pinter at the Institute of Contemporary Arts landon on 6 February 1990; broadcast on BBC 2, printed by

Granta, and by numerous publications in Europe and the US), Salman Rushdie makes a Messianic plea for 'the unimportantooking little room' of literary fiction 'where we can hear voices talking about everything in every possible way'. But is this space open to all, . . . or is it a more exclusive domain for a select few? It seems, Rushdie admits, that 'for many millions of human beings, these (literary) books are entirely without attraction or value'. So the 'unimportant-looking room is only for those select few who aspire to the condition of literature and their equally elitist readers.

Islam, it would also seem, is against such an enterprise. Why? Because Islam 'has set its face so resolutely against the idea that it, like all ideas, is an event inside history'. Surely, some mistake here! The Prophet of Islam was a real, living person who existed inside history; and insofar as the idea of Islam is based on what he taught, Islam is an event in history. And the Qur'an, as it was revealed over a period of 23 years, is both a revelatory event and a permanent text inside history; indeed, even its interpretation must take history into account as many of its verses are a commentary on actual, historical events! Rushdie makes this infantile assertion to negate the enterprise of Islam (in The Salanic Verses this notion occurs as the 'Untime of the Imam') - to write it off from history and thus make it irrelevant to our times.

Rushdie needs to establish this false premise so that his opening assertion can be driven home. 'We have been witnessing an attack upon a particular work of fiction', he writes, 'that is also an attack upon the very idea of the novel form'. This inductive leap in the dark – from one work of fiction to all 'the novel forms' - is, like all inductive leaps, logically invalid; Muslims are only protesting about The Satanic Verses, they are clearly not protesting about other novels, including other works of Rushdie. The trick here is to produce a positive emotion by combining two irrationally negative ideas. If one accepts the false premise that Muslims regard their world-view to be an idea outside history, then it is a small step to believe that an attack on Rushdie is an attack on all literature!

But let us not be too harsh on logical and factual grounds. Rushdie is writing a love letter, answering an attack, 'not by an attack but a declaration of love'. Quite apart from the fact that this 'love' is in sharp contrast to the hatred and contempt be

and towards Muslims a year ago, Rushdie's love has special when compared with faith. 'Love need not be blind', he his readers, 'faith must, ultimately, be a leap in the dark'. the believers are by definition irrational. They 'revere the and unquestioningly' and are thus 'paralysed by it'. Moreover, wide of the sacred is quite simply one of the most conservative any culture, because it seeks to turn other ideas hardainty, Progress, Change - into crime'. By this logic, adures with sacred notions are doomed for having turned mozess' and 'change' into 'crimes': where else can they go except mads oblivion? It is indeed surprising that Islam, despite its and notions, made so much progress that it became a world olization. It is also surprising that traditional cultures, being valued, still seem so much better at making peace with nature ad conserving the environment. But the assertion is false on anther ground: it assumes that all uncertainty, all progress, all dang, is Good. Secular societies have deified progress and dage. Societies based on sacred notions make value judgements necouse that change is progress and that progress is not at the owner of one's physical, social and psychological well-being. If Rubble has a poor knowledge of Islam, surely one would expect in to know something about traditional cultures as well as entemporary ecological and environmental movements?

The Muslim Argument

But need faith be a leap in the dark? Faith can be reasoned and many conscientious believers base their beliefs on rational mands. Indeed, faith can be as reasoned as theoretical physics a modern cosmology much of which, after all the calculations ad observations, is based on faith, on certain metaphysical symptions about nature, space, time and so on. Read Khun ad Feverabend. The Cosmological and Design arguments for begistence of a Creator may not convince some; but they are I reasoned arguments just as string theory and the big bang boy of the universe are based on certain arguments. There is way reason or logic can arbitrate between the axiomatic claims deligion or of science. Indeed, every student of modern history deas knows this. Only Rushdie can sell this obsolete, diffeenth-century, view and be hailed as a great thinker. But <sup>160</sup> a century earlier, Pascal demonstrated in his famous wager ait is more reasonable to believe than not to believe.



#### Militant Secularism

Unconcerned about the banality of his statements, Rushie proceeds to state that 'religion seeks to privilege one language above all others' whereas 'the novel has always been about the way in which different languages, values and narratives quarter All ideologies, indeed all discursive thought, seek to privilege on language over another. (Perhaps the sole exception is the kind of mystical discourse that has little cognitive content.) Inasfar as the postmodern novel is a child of militant secularism, it seeks to privilege the language of secularism. It does that by throwing scorn on the notion of the sacred, by writing traditional people and world-views out of history, by dramatizing non-worldalternatives as cul-de-sacs, and by demonstrating, with all the array of literary devices at its disposal, that secularism is the only real experience we have. Indeed Rushdic, paraphrasing Man without comprehending, tells us that fiction begins with the acceptance that 'all that is solid has melted into air, that realin and morality are not givens but imperfect human constructs thus by definition Rushdie's kind of fiction starts from a metaphysical stance that writes off all the believers and everything the could hold sacred, with relativism (cognitive as well as moral) as the only truth. This is why in his novel one cannot find a snek character with reasoned faith who is a decent human being. Such fiction only privileges one language over all others.

Starting from the point that nothing matters, everything is meaningless, Rushdie's fiction proceeds to claim a rather large territory for itself. It is in 'its origins the schismatic Other of the sacred (and authorless) text, so it is also the art most likely to be our god-shaped holes.' Since god-shaped holes can only be filled by some kind of god – square pegs do not fit round holes-literature then is god. It is thus both the sacred enterprise as well as an authority unto itself. As Richard Webster points out in his truly brilliant study, A Brief History of Blasphemy (The Orwell Press, Suffolk, 1990) – and Rushdie himself admits – individuals with 'god-shaped-holes' are not without spiritual yearnings. The 'zealous emptiness yearns to be filled once again with faith him this emptiness, Rushdie has 'poured the art of the novel, so that the novel has become his religion, the faith which he is prepared to defend against all who challenge it'.

However, Rushdie's defence of his creed turned out to be im-

and frankly, an insult to the intelligence to the intelligence to the intelligence to the intelligence are the interview, and the interview are fair pages; plus a cool £100,000 – to present food Fair also appeared in Newsweek which is said the £20,000 for the privilege (the left-wing which has supported Rushdie with Messianic to publish the silence-breaking article; but, as a wide three loyalty to the wind and went for the highest with mentioned the word?)

#### Religion

set states by reminding us that The Satanic Verses is a make the But that been described 'as a work of bad history, and the been described 'as a work of bad history, and the been described 'as a work of bad history, as the product of an international-be company, as an act of murder, as the product of a mapping of the Rushdie debate, and to the question whether The work is or is not 'bad history' we shall come shortly. It is can there be any doubt that The Satanic Verses is some 'I mean one has to be a dupe of superannuated with the believe that a novel whose religion is secularism, we could doubt, which uses many languages but all of them is the surface of the religion it parodies, abuses or ridicules, or in the surface of the religion it parodies, abuses or ridicules, or in the surface of the religion it parodies, abuses or ridicules, or in the surface of the religion it parodies, can be a pro-religious to be Rushdie really believe that his (very few) Muslim was get that stupid?

time made a category mistake, Rushdie tells us. A category medical but who made that mistake? To read fiction as it were fact is a category mistake, we are told. But if the mistake high fiction, why was it necessary to mimic the Sīra in the dieal, why was it necessary to ensure that every major made for its meticulously reproduced, why was it necessary matter Martin Lings' Life of Muhammad Based on Early Alea & Unwin, London, 1983) page after page? Why think description match word for word the description in the physical appearance of the Prophet by so many the sit of the Sīra? How is it possible for a deranged thing from delusions, to remember the names (even

Sa versus Civility

I have to look them up, every time!) and physical descriptions of every one of the Prophet's wives in a dream sequence? Are the verses of the Qur'ān, even though they may appear in a dream, fact or fiction? Why does the author take great care, even with the minutest of points, to tell his (initiated) readers that he is talking about the Sīra – to the extent of being too-clever-by-half? And what are we to make of a text that selectively paraphrases only where it suits the ideological purpose of the author from an extensive historical corpus? And what are we to say when fiction claims the right to overturn 1400 years of devoted striving to make clear the distinction between fact and fable? Yes. A category mistake has been made. For Rushdie to tell us that facts are only tangentially necessary for his fiction is truly adding insult to that category injury.

'I am being enveloped in and described by a language that does not fit me', cries Rushdie. That's exactly what every believing Muslim said after reading his novel. Indeed, while this experience may be new for Rushdie, it is nothing new for Muslims. The culture of modernity, its ruling ideology of secularism, Orientalism – the Western study devoted to explaining Islam – all strive to fit the Muslims with false descriptions, false language, false identity. The pervasiveness of these 'images of ignorance' based upon a 'distorted imagination' are the attitudes that constructed and are

confirmed by the whole of The Satanic Verses.

#### Abuse Being a Literary Language

And now to abuse and ridicule. First Rushdie offers his own crude parody of what the Muslims find offensive in the novel. Then he suggests that his critics are unfamiliar with the conventions of literary fiction . . . and quite incapable of distinguishing between the novelist and his characters. Let me state categorically: it is not the bits of the novel that Muslims find offensive: they find the rewriting of the Sīra as an insulting parody offensive: they find the attempt at the creation of an anti-Qur'an ridiculously arrogant and offensive; they find the attempt at writing Muslim culture out of history offensive; they find being given the point-blank choice (even in fiction) of oblivion or total acceptance of triumphant secularism offensive; they find the argument that the only future they have in Britain is without their cultural identity

they find the portrayal of believers, blacks and women and they find it offensive that religion can only be in terms and conditions of secularism, that it is as may say it is, however foreign its portrayal of God and to the believer. In short: Muslims find the whole damn defensive, into the piece of blubber, but the whole wretched by isolating the alleged Muslim offensive into a few work. Rushdie, as Webster points out, is 'doing precisely of the alleges his Muslim critics are doing. He discusses a book with property of the state of

Perpurpose of insulting, obscene and abusive language, argues lable, is to create a literary language and literary forms in ish the experience of formerly-colonised, still-disadvantaged might find full expression'. Further explanation is provided in the novel itself: 'to turn insults into strengths, whigs, tories, artisal chose to wear with pride the names they were given in and First, who is Rushdie to undertake such an exercise on thalf of Muslims? Especially, when he tells us: 'I believe in no ad and have not done so since I was a young adolescent.' Thus, rugue, in Webster's words, 'That he is reclaiming language on thill of all Muslims is an act of quite extraordinary presumption'. and, do we really want to reclaim these images? Are all nasty annual images, products of ignorant and distorted perceptions abry are, worth reclaiming? Should the Blacks wear the epithet with pride? Should the Muslims go round reclaiming the sem historic legacy that describes them as fanatic, licentious, which and bloodthirsty? Webster again: 'it is difficult to avoid recordusion that . . . Salman Rushdie is offering to Muslim takes not a renewed sense of pride and dignity but an oblique ad unintended invitation to internalise centuries of Christian

and so to the central message of the novel. 'What does the widdsent from?', asks Rushdie. 'Certainly not from people's the faith, though I have none. It dissents most clearly from people of the faith, though I have none. It dissents most clearly from people of the from the world is the view that the world is the contrick, the novel kills the option of faith for the of the forever, by presenting his Babu world-view as the of sweetness and light, worthy of any and all respect, the fiction thrusts the undiluted acidic dogma of secularism

down the throats of his unsuspecting readers. It offers not disbut imposes the orthodoxy of doubt, the dogma of moral relations and the creed of triumphant secularism. It is as liberating as the torture gadgetry of the Spanish Inquisition. When blasphens used in the tashion of Rushdie, Webster points out these be nothing liberating about it. For this is exactly the way it should be blasphemy tends to be used by orthodox religious distributed order to sustain their own repressive ideologies of purely standthe challenges posed by other cultures.

#### The Convoluted Sermon

The arguments, if they can be described as such in In Good Faith' are either of truly 'bewildering naivety or are durant towards soft targets. For example, Rushdie finds it hard to believe that people 'have been willing to judge The Satanic Verses as its author, without reading it, without finding out what manner of man this fellow might be . . . . But since the novel is writer for Western audiences, and since for the vast majority of Musine as Rushdie tells us right at the beginning, fiction is quite meaningless, this is hardly surprising. Either Rushdie must are cede that Muslims are intelligent and can and do read fiction a fiction, or he must concede that being fools they will judge but without reading his unreadable book. And what logic saw has one has to read a book to judge its author? How many Martine have dipped into Das Kapital let alone read it from cover to awar How many of those who fought Hitler (who mentioned him lia the manner of man he was actually read Mein Kampit Even a British law, one has only to prove that an offence custs not be prove that one has read the offensive material. But there another more important point to be made here. Did it over the the author of The Satanic Verses that his Western reades will accept his picture of the Prophet Muhammad without ever trace to find out what manner of man he was? Did he not know he in his novel history and fable are so merged that knowledge precluded, the potential for truth obscured, the ability to make reasoned evaluations fundamentally eroded the masshift of dialogue made a nonsense? Does he really believe that also be long and convoluted sermon, his readers will rush out to find the for themselves what manner of world-view is Islam

protesters such as Shabbir Akhtar.

Issued crude character assassination wins described as a 'Stalinist' for pointing to accountable to the community'! As proceed a protect already subscribes to this Ruddle follows a clear logic: anyone his sacrosanct art must either be a nasty authoritarian character of

an Sale

and Range trees to paint himself as a lonely saint are in see the tide of fundamentalist wrath that is the solitary figure of a single writer a saicadable book against a religion boasting was beseven. He told his friend Blake Morrison, in the salay interview (also published in Granta 31, Penguin, London), 'there was so much wave coming at me, and I just couldn't shout same be leard. This from a man who has sold over a had his wayward novel translated even was European languages, who can, by simply lifting a to the front page of any newspaper, anywhere in as & lated States, or any television news bulletin, or and the state of lengthy documentary without any effort. the a second of the European and American liberal the generated pro-Rushdie and anti-Muslim copy Mount Cone, one can safely say that and communication resources of the behind him. And even after all the was an entered havoc he has caused, he still demands led a separation doesn't exist, the book has see sepressed. So freedom of expression now have in paperback: if this is the case then there scheding this one, who are being denied The irony when court writer of fortune is holding a billion

#### **Pieces of Literary Polemics**

Both 'Is Nothing Sacred?' and 'In Good Faith' have been hailed as the 'greatest pieces of literary polemics ever written'. Indeed, it seems that Rushdie cannot write anything that can be described by ordinary, human, superlatives. This is partly because he is championing an ideology, an ideology which is incapable of questioning its own assumptions, which sees all Muslims as 'fanatics' and 'fundamentalists'. And partly because he has the undying support of a group of friends who occupy key positions in the media. The situation is such that if Rushdie coughed a diseased phlegm on the face of one of his novelist friends, it would be captured on film by Tariq Ali and turned into a documentary. which would be commissioned by Farouk Dhondy and shown in the 'Rear Window' slot of Channel Four; Blake Morrison would reprint it as the lead story in The Independent on Sunday which would also contain an instant poll of various luminaries (Harold Pinter, Fay Weldon, Margaret Drabble, Ian McEwan, Arnold Wesker. Penelope Lively, Michael Foot: 'it is the most brilliant piece of political writing I've ever read in my life' (what an impoverished life!), et al.) and, Hanif Qureshi would write a lyrical appreciation of it in the Guardian as well as make an extensive appearance on 'The Late Show' or 'The South Bank Show' ('The more filthy the better as far as I am concerned I too have spat a lot of phlegm in my life . . . '), Bill Buford would put it on the cover of Granta and Granta would also publish the damn thing as a pamphlet.

#### The Supremist Malaise

Malise Ruthven too sees Muslims in much the same light with one difference: they are not just enemies of freedom, they are also definitely inferior beings. Unlike Rushdie who keeps his liberal supremacy at a subtle level, Ruthven, who I first met during my days at Arabia: Islamic World Review some ten years ago, is unashamedly supremist. In his world, there is a strong, rigid, pecking order with liberal secularists topping the bill. One knows that one is in familiar territory right from page one. Scene: Hyde Park, London. Action: Amongst the French, Spanish and the Dutch, and the 'sophisticated, suave metropolitans like the blacks', all wandering around the park, some 'utterly foreign'.

at observed. These aliens look 'wild and scraggy with or deli-flecked beards' and 'wear white hats and long baggy with flapping shirt tails'. Dialogue: 'I am writing a book. Linu read The Satanic Verses? What about Dante?' Commen-Unil recent times, women were positively discouraged from untin mosques, lest they distract men from their devotions. or Commentary: Edward Lane, An Account of the and Customs of the Modern Egyptians, London, 1836. and Edward Lane, the gentleman-scholar of the colonial times about the Egyptians to be sexually inflammable and perdeprayed, violent, obstinate, stupid with a tendency to walt idiots and, at least some of them, having a strong shantforeating glass (see Rana Kabbani's analysis in Europe's ind of the Orient, Macmillan, London, 1986). Ruthven is a sundern reincarnation of Lane, and A Satanic Affair (Chatto elfidus, London, 1990) is Victorian paternalism and jingoism

The 'aliens' in the park are from the Indian subcontinent and Muslims, inferior to Arabs. They are 'harsh, neurotic and Maure. Unlike the Arabs who are secure in their identity hause the Our an is in Arabic, the 'Indo-Muslim identity . . . sellunsure of itself: it thrives on conflict and persecution, for in through such can it reinforce its sense of distinctiveness.' If teroor sods feel persecuted there may be a strong reason for tafter all they are living in a society that discriminates against Im But what's this about they 'thrive on violence?' Does this that the legacy of Edward Lane or is it an observation? Until to Rushdie affair blew up, the subcontinental Muslims were tembed as model, law-abiding citizens. Indeed, even Ruthven whishat 'If race were taken out of the equation, many, perhaps M. Bradford Muslims, would reveal themselves to be model In olivers.' Make up your mind man; either they are model insorconflict-seeking, bloodthirsty renegades? But consistency ad logic are not Ruthven's strong points.

#### Morting History

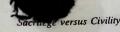
losy that Ruthven is totally confused would be the merest ding of the true state of affairs. He tells us that the 'doctrine' to Prophet was merely the recipient of revelation and did

Sacra versus Civility

not interfere with it was 'canonized' in the ninth century after the debate between the Mutazilis and some group called Hadilh Folk'. Does that mean that the Muslims before that period believed that the revelation was interfered with by the Prophet? If so, why does not history - the same history that does not bother to hide the incident of the Satanic verses - tell us so? The debate about the created or uncreated nature of the Our'an was between the Mutazilis and the Asharites - and not 'Hadith Folk' and continued till the tenth century. We have numerous other equally banal statements. He tells us, for example, that death by stoning is a Qur'anic injunction; it is not in the Qur'an. In Islam, we are informed, 'to question is to question the rule of God': vet. questioning is the methodology of the Qur'an, the Qur'an repeatedly asks questions and exhorts believers and unbelievers to ask questions and seek their answers. We are further told that 'the methodology of the hadith collectors depended more on isnads than content'. Does that mean that if a hadith is contrary to Qur'anic teachings it was accepted because the isnad was foolproof? Why did the Muslim scholars then insist that any valid hadith must agree with the Qur'an and reason before one proceeds to check the isnad? Were they really so foolish as to travel for hundreds of miles checking for isnād while the content was clearly against the Qur'an or reason? Something is wrong somewhereand it is in Ruthven's head. A point made amply clear when we hear Ruthven announce that 'Sunni Islam, lacking in educated priesthood, seemed to have committed the sin of shirk, by elevating the Qur'an to the level of God.' Does that mean that Shi'a Islam does not regard the Qur'an as the Word of God? The Our an is Islam: to be a Muslim is to (voluntarily) accept that the commands of the Qur'an are the commands of God. 'Muslim apologists', we read further, 'rationalise the Prophet's twelve wives . . . in terms of his needs to form political and tribal alliances' but 'like Joseph Smith, the Mormon prophet, Muhammad may have justified his sexual urges by reference to divine revelation.' Ruthven too has his sexual urges as we learn when he encounters a prostitute, in the good company of Shabbir Akhtar, and wants to give her some money to 'listen' (tell us another one!) to her. Would Ruthven, then, be ready to marry elderly widows much past their prime? Would he marry an old woman who was about to die in three months? Can he deny that, even today, marriage

areat part in bringing warring tribes together and throng tribal loyalties in Arabia? Secular apologists have strange knack of imposing their personal, convoluted theories on data that can easily be explained on the bring of real historical facts.

adventure has taken the classical bogey of the Prophet's marriages Alaime Rodinson. His methodology has three components. to give himself scholarly pretensions he uses a number of and aggressively anti-Islamic Orientalists, old and new, who abdojustify his absurd and outlandish theories. Thus Michael in the co-author of Hagarism, who argues that Islam is a dux conspiracy with Judaic roots (see M.D. Valimamad's MWBR, Vol.1, No.2 (1981), pp.64-6), is the main for Ruthven's portrait of the Prophet. Supporting cast this Sir William Muir, the nineteenth-century Orientalist who and a picture of the Prophet as an anti-thesis of Jesus (Jesus is diste, Muhammad was sensual; Jesus loved peace, was violent; Jesus was sincere, Muhammad was sixe-in short, Jesus was good and holy, Muhammad was and evil); and John Wansbrough, A. Guillaume and W. becomen Watt. To counter the criticism he may receive for suparticular category of jingoist Orientalists, Ruthven states by pious Muslims have occasionally taken offence at the and of the Prophet 'by such writers'. I suppose that since a ut plous, it automatically excludes them from being intellia objective and critical! Drawing freely from these authors, contells us that the Prophet behaved with 'utter ruthlessness', the origins of the Qur'anic text are obscure, Zinā (adultery) that the root of the Islamic cosmic order and historic Dar was like 'the old pre-Gorbachev Soviet bloc'. The first aggestions are, of course, a total distortion of history, the and a product of Ruthven's deranged mind, but the reasons What comparison are interesting. Apparently, some fugahā' sol forbade Muslims to go to Dar al-Harb. It does not occur when that such a ruling may have been introduced during knied when Muslim travellers risked their lives by entering Muslim lands. After all, the Christians of yore were not all bospitable towards the 'Saracens'.



#### **Labelling Muslims**

The second component of Ruthven's method is labelling; if you label someone, say call them fundamentalist, then obviously you have understood them. We are thus treated to a classification of Muslims in Britain, like the Deobandis, Barelwi and Tablighi Jamaat who get their funding from Saudi Arabia (a little difficult when they are banned from the country). The Islamic movement, we are told, has two mainsprings: the Ahmadiyya which exercises an influence on the 'better educated' despite the fact that its founder Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1839-1908) 'announced that he was receiving revelations directly from God' and went on to declare himself 'an avatar of Krishna' and claimed that 'he travelled to Kashmir and Afghanistan in order to convert the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel'; and the other Jama'at-e-Islami, which is an extreme right-wing fundamentalist organization. Thus enlightened, Ruthven tells his readers that the notion of izzal, or honour, dictates everything these groups do and everyone, but everyone, suffers from some kind of sexual hang-up. Most have 'trouble performing with wives they have no feelings for, wives chosen by their relatives in Pakistan'. Local prostitutes thus do brisk business: 'there was no scandal to the faith in the services (they) render the community . . . no threat to izzal in the back-to-backs.'

The third aspect of Ruthven's methodology is to ransack unsavoury Muslim fringe groups and use their literature and opinions both to provide evidence for his absurd theories and as a trump card in discussion. Thus, we are told that 'embedded in the generalised anti-Western thrust of fundamentalist discourse there exists a specific anti-semitic thread'. The evidence for this generalization comes from the articles of Yagub Zaki. Does Mosley provide us with evidence that there is a general anti-semitic trend in Britain? We are further told that 'in the Islamic literary tradition' superhuman myths are attributed to Muhammad: 'he was born circumcised, the earth swallowed up his excrement (does she not swallow all our excrement?) . . . His shirt was enough to cure a Jew's blindness . . . 'This is at the same level as considering the journalism of the Sun as the literary tradition of Britain. (You know, all those stories about vivacious nurses and naughty vicans bonking in the church garden!) In Bradford, Ruthven asks a Muslim scientist called 'Anwar', (who, my friends in Bradford

does not exist): 'Isn't there a conflict between the work of creation and Darwinian evolution'; and then reader that he did not want to remind Anwar about the Baz, the blind Saudi jurist, who declared that the earth would not want to remind Ruthven about the countless primers as The Chariots of God and other similar and the Baul would like to invite him to come and ask me the saked 'Anwar': I would take great pleasure in the does not exist.

and goes around Bradford cornering various people and them in discussion. 'I went to Bradford to listen', he is preparedly; but the statement is used, every time, to make indexending point. He meets Sher Azam, President of the inal of Mosques, and presents two arguments: (1) The Satanic work of fiction, and you have to see the book as a ask not just offending bits out of context, and (2) no one is meled to buy a book they do not like. The first argument I attrady tackled in my discussion of Rushdie's 'In Good It he me answer the second question in the way it deserves ok answered. Suppose I write a fictional work based on the Lid Malise Ruthven. I change certain details but ensure that indearly recognizable as Malise Ruthven, writer and journalist. talk! change make him look like . . . well, lets just say a all many piece of work with all manner of evil sidelines. Will the normy about buying the book or will he take me to court hilled and defamation? When Duncan Campbell, the investigatrumalist, recently found himself in a similar situation, as and a BBC drama-doc, he did not worry about watching it lisating room - he took the BBC to court and won. The idea a offence only exists if you buy a book is a particularly Mounding one. The same can be said of the other question Anwar: 'You have studied Islam and know that what's 10 book isn't true. Why does it matter, since you know the Mowing the truth does not repeal an offence: Ruthven the truth about my proposed book about him; it does not has the libel and defamation it contains have been sorted Rubiven takes great pride in scoring points from people who and equipped to defend themselves. However, when he meets Akhtar the tables are turned. He has no answer to the

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Ruthven goes around Bradford cornering various people and maging them in discussion. 'I went to Bradford to listen', he ulsus repeatedly; but the statement is used, every time, to make nondescending point. He meets Sher Azam, President of the (unal of Mosques, and presents two arguments: (1) The Satanic low is a work of fiction, and you have to see the book as a thole, not just offending bits out of context, and (2) no one is ampelled to buy a book they do not like. The first argument I have already tackled in my discussion of Rushdie's 'In Good let me answer the second question in the way it deserves whe answered. Suppose I write a fictional work based on the He of Malise Ruthven. I change certain details but ensure that his dearly recognizable as Malise Ruthven, writer and journalist. In details I change make him look like . . . well, lets just say a nasty piece of work with all manner of evil sidelines. Will Ruben worry about buying the book or will he take me to court inheland defamation? When Duncan Campbell, the investigabe journalist, recently found himself in a similar situation, as im of a BBC drama-doc, he did not worry about watching it this sitting room - he took the BBC to court and won. The idea an offence only exists if you buy a book is a particularly tenhounding one. The same can be said of the other question hads Anwar: 'You have studied Islam and know that what's the book isn't true. Why does it matter, since you know the Knowing the truth does not repeal an offence: Ruthven the truth about my proposed book about him; it does not than that the libel and defamation it contains have been sorted Ruthven takes great pride in scoring points from people who troot equipped to defend themselves. However, when he meets Akhtar the tables are turned. He has no answer to the counter-arguments produced by Akhtar – he thus resorts be character assassination and suggests that Akhtar should consider therapy! The kettle proposing a solution for a black pot!

Eventually, Ruthven wanders into a conference where an impressive account of The Satanic Verses, locating it in the content of world literature, is being presented. Ruthven tells us that the Muslim gathering at the conference had serious problems in understanding the beauty of magical realism. 'There is something wrong when a book of this kind is called literature', Muslims kept shouting. This was a strange reaction on their part as magical realism developed by Jorge Borges and Gabreil Garcia Marquez in South America deliberately subverts the dominant mode of narrative realism by introducing surrealistic events. This subversion of narrative forms has a political dimension: 'it involved a deliberate, self-conscious attempt to break with the cultural imperialism of European form.' Since The Satanic Verses fiasco, we have had a long line of bearded academics telling us that magical realism is a new and liberating form of literature that benefits Third World folk. First: there is nothing new in magical realism - it is there in Kafka and Beckett. Second: Borges, Garcia, Llosa, Fuentes et al. are more European than South American: as they themselves emphasize and is obvious in their politics and attitudes towards the indigenous people of Latin America. An issue in Mario Vargas Llosa's campaign for the presidency of Peru was his condescending attitude towards the Peruvian Indians. Indeed, more aware South American novelists, like Vlady Kociancich (author of The Last Days of William Shakespear, Heinemann, London, 1990), although a student of Borges and still writing in a similar genre, cannot distance themselves further from the magical realists. Third: magical realism gives the appearance of speaking from the perspective that incorporates the Other but in so doing it merely utilizes that conception of the Other that fits within the Orientalist paradigm. The grotesqueries in Midnights Children could have sat happily in Kipling; Carlos Fuentes' murdering, looting, obnoxious Mexican revolutionary in The Old Gringo would have no problem in finding a place in any conventional, anti-Mexican novel. Those who sing the praises of magical realism as a liberating literary force are in fact promoting a new brand of a favourite Western brew: 'cultural imperialism'

# Fundamentalism

thout the book, Ruthven glibly compares Christian and fundamentalism and applies the characteristics of one to But Christian fundamentalism and Islamic fundamenhave merely an 'ism' in common - they are not comparable The distinction is to be found in the adjectives Christian Islamic Both 'isms' arise from different roots, are founded erent texts, history of ideas and institutional and philosophic and thought and action. Neither are simplistic movements and contain many diverse shades of opinion and interpretastances. The crucial point is that both fundamentalisms are arctative even though their approach is literal in the sense effection meaning of their founding texts. Christian funantalism is incomprehensible without knowing the history of Amulanity and the modern disputes of Christian exegesis that but occasioned a variety and diversity of fundamentalist re-The same is true of 'Islamic fundamentalism', but here major distinction must be added. The term 'Islamic fundamenin has been imposed rather than chosen by the Muslim moments of a variety of interpretations of the contemporary managof being a Muslim. If the definitional points and doctrinal mmentation of Christian fundamentalism were put to such Mains they would deny, as articles of their very faith, that they add or should or in fact do subscribe to such notions. To analyse fundamentalism as if it were a Christian response to the Ble is total nonsense.

Rathen comes up with two insights by studying 'Islamic admentalism' in terms of 'Christian fundamentalism': (1) the maining of religion is an essential component of what is terally called 'fundamentalism'; and (2) materialism is central bandamentalism. For Muslims, we are told, this 'privatisation takes the form of internalising the text of the Qur'ān'. This believing Muslims try to internalize the text of the Qur'ān — is the definition of being a Muslim. It is the Sufis who, by amon consent, succeed most in internalizing the text of the life in but they are generally considered to be at the opposite of the scale to fundamentalism. And Muslim fundamentalists the more or less materialists than non-fundamentalists: the majority of those dubbed 'fundamentalists' in Pakistan, India,

Bangladesh, Iran, Turkey, Tunisia, Algeria, Nigeria and the Sudan are poor people, existing just above subsistence level. To dub them materialist is the height of secularist folly.

This absurd analysis has a purpose. It labels Muslims with certain characteristics which enables Ruthven to reach his precon. ceived conclusion: 'Islamic fundamentalism, like fascism, holds out the vision of a "fully integrated" society free from damaging divisions of class and wealth . . . Like fascism, it seeks a psychological foundation in absolute certainty: the only difference being that instead of the Will of the Leader, it relies on the Will of God . . . The fundamentalist mentality - absolutist, anti-democratic and highly authoritarian - is prone to see conspiracies where none exist . . . 'So Hitler comes in useful again. But what is this: Ruthven actually likes Muslims: 'I am', he writes, 'well disposed towards religious fundamentalism'. Why? The answer is given a few pages later where Ruthven delivers his coup de grace: 'fundamentalism . . . is hard, factualistic and philistine, impervious to the multi-layered nuances of meaning that reside in texts, in fiction, in music and iconographies, in the cell of art and culture where modernity - that universal modernity created by a vibrant, still dynamic "West" - stores its spiritual wealth.' So, fundamentalism may be inferior, but Ruthven is well disposed towards it because he is a supremist: like the fascist, he believes in the purity of his dominating and subjugating culture, that 'universal modernity' that preserves the purity and hegemony of the 'vibrant, still dynamic West'. Ruthven's supremist mediocrity does not allow him to see the naivety of his statement. If the spirituality of Ruthven's culture is only found in texts, fiction, music and iconographies, then it is a very impoverished spirituality for it is not readily accessible; moreover, it is only accessible to a select few since only the elite plough through literary texts and fiction, appreciate classical music, and patronize art galleries. Or, is one to believe that all pop music, pulp fiction, cultish iconography is spiritually uplifting? It is a basic tenet of belief of postmodernist writers that great art and literature is only accessible in the seminar rooms of universities and colleges; that the ordinary mass of people have nothing to do with literature and art - indeed, they should be kept away from such enterprises!

We now move to the climax of Ruthven's hierarchical litany. This time it is that of cultural evolution wherein the Greek

the littest not merely to survive but to triumph over their lingering associations with that most primitive the fully oral culture, wherein the residents of his and a limaginings are to be located since they merely Our'an as a sound form - as a literary text it is chensible to them. Islam is inferior because it is an oral Asevidence Ruthven tells us: 'the deep connection with maintained in Islamic law, where oral testimony still males and written affidavits are not usually taken in Writing things down has been the Muslim custom since of Islam. The Qur'an says: 'When you contract a unfor 2 fixed term, record it in writing' (2: 282). Writing was when the Qur'an was revealed; the Prophet recorded amountracts and treaties in writing. In an Islamic court, oral spreferred to written affidavits for a simple reason: Shuis can be obtained under duress; oral testimony allows the concerned to speak freely in the presence of a judge. The and the Guildford Four - who were imprisoned on the basis symposions signed under pressure from the police, and released were quashed — illustrates to mint well . . .

#### Varderous Act

h 'ln Good Faith', Rushdie asks: 'How is freedom gained?' Adanswers: 'It is taken: never given.' In a world where secularist autorians wield the power of description and render invisible and and information or reasoned argument that challenges to take their freedom and break out their authoritarian spell. We must fight to ensure that we have and freedom to describe ourselves with our own languages adcategories. Secularism demands that Muslims answer only as Pastioned, according to the agenda of relevant issues determined the secular imagination - whether or not these are relevant to inquiry. The very act of answering these questions is an an subjugation and willing cultural annihilation. As Webster Rands us so eloquently, in this 'secularised and agnostic culture greatest threat to human values seems increasingly likely to ment from murderous faith, as it has done for many centuries, thom murderous art'. Muslims must ensure that they set their

own agenda of issues and discussion and not be led by a murderous sect of confused and ignorant, but highly articulate and powerful, secularist literati.

. . . The existential anxiety of Rushdie and Ruthven sees its expression in the supremist and authoritarian theology that is postmodern fiction. Their products are like the museum of photography designed by a blind architect. There will always be individuals ready to admire and pay a high price for their 'art'.

Source: Muslim World Book Review, 11/1, 1990, pp. 3-19.

# Islam and the Return of Rushdie as the Prodigal Son

. . . With reference to Philip J. Stewart's letter (2 January) regarding Salman Rushdie's "offence", it seems that following the author's reported conversion to Islam, not only non-Muslims but some Muslims too, are confused over the issue. That Rushdie is an apostate and has blasphemed against Islam by abusing the Prophet (Shatm al-Rasul) in The Satanic Verses has not only been maintained by Iran but also by more than 40 member states of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) at their Foreign Ministers' Conference held in Riyadh in March 1989.

The author cannot be automatically absolved of the offence following his conversion to Islam if the book continues in circulation and the author does not repent of having written it. Indeed, his affirmation of Islam becomes meaningless if the offence he had committed by writing and publishing The Satanic Verses continues in circulation in the form of hardback and translations.

This is why the UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs and other Muslim leaders in Britain and abroad have doubted his sincerity in embracing Islam and regarded it as "an apparent ploy to get him off the hook". Notwithstanding his somersaults regarding the publication of the paperback edition, his crime becomes all the more grave if he claims to be a Muslim and continues to insult the Prophet and Islam through the continued

The Muslim Argument

and dirculation of the sacrilegious book worldwide.

wair Ahsan

or General Foundation

or OThe Independent, 4th January 1991.

Back Into the Fold?

by Shabbir Akhtar

famon Rushdie, the prodigal son of Islam, wishes to return Fair enough. But there is a distant land from which no medums. Let Rushdie find his way home; and the Muslim ther will forgive.

Notes fear a disreputable motive for conversion. Islam is not (Indianity, and fear, no less than love, is a worthy emotion. But the fear of Allah is a virtue, fear of others around us is owardice. The suspicion is that Rushdie fears the Iranians, while Allah has a greater claim upon this emotion.

Rushdie is welcome to convert to Islam, if he wishes. He is not doing a favour to anyone; on the contrary, Allah is doing him a brour by guiding him to Islam. But Rushdie must "enter fully allo a state of peace and submission" (Qur'an: 2:208). This is, therefore, the fundamental attitude all believers should cultivate.

Actions normally speak louder than words. But actions must al least reflect and be compatible with one's speeches. So his book, The Satanic Verses, must go. We have had enough of Rushdie's Faustian nonsense. The Satanic Verses is acknowledged, even by many non-Muslims, to be a calculated attempt to vilify and slander Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his noble spouses and companions. Certain characters, such as the Persian companion of Prophet Muhammad, Salman al-Farsi, are created afresh specifically as mouthpieces through whom Rushdie can parody the principles of Islam.

#### The Muslim Argument

#### Sacrilege versus Civility

Again, Mahound is an offensive description that no self-confessing Muslim has ever applied to the noble Prophet of Allah. So conclusive is the case against the continued publication of *The Satanic Verses* at this late hour that no fair-minded observer has any choice in the matter.

Conversions to a faith can be sincere or opportunist. Anyone who publicly declares that "There is no God except Allah, and Muhammad is His last envoy" is a Muslim. Once one sincerely utters that statement, such an individual must then attempt to live according to the laws of Islam. Rushdie would be no exception.

Individuals who genuinely convert to a faith often display a kind of zeal not found in ordinary adherents. If Rushdie is to be the St Paul of Islam, he must immediately stop persecuting his brothers. The Satanic Verses must be withdrawn as proof of his sincerity. Otherwise, Muslims are entitled to doubt his motives.

Muslims have suffered grievously during the Rushdie episode. Admittedly, he has also suffered much and has little chance of resuming a normal life in the near future. He is, nevertheless, lucky for there is still a possibility that one day he will. But those Muslims who have died during the affair have no chance of resuming any kind of life. The dependents of those martyrs now live in abject poverty, entirely dependent on our charity. Rushdie should apologise to these people. If they demand retaliation or compensation, they are entitled to it. If they forgive and remit, agreeing to forego their right, Allah will exalt them further.

Muslims in Britain are, naturally, not in a charitable mood. Years of racism and isolation have embittered the most innocent, generous and pure-hearted among us. We may forgive; we won't forget. It is up to Rushdie to create a mood of reconciliation. His continued insistence that his novel is not meant to be offensive does not help matters. If one wishes to enjoy a romantic evening, one does not begin by fighting with one's wife.

Hostile forces to Islam recognise that it is hard to convert Muslims to other faiths. They have therefore been busy trying to encourage Muslims to be unfaithful to their own traditions. Such disloyally would be a first step towards disbelief. "Subvert, if not convert" is their motto. Muslims will, of course, always remain loyal to Islam; and the more Islam is attacked, the more it grows in strength.

Let us return to our main theme - the withdrawal of the

has frequently been rewriting the commandments and his opinions. Clinically and cynically, he exploits every to his advantage. Like his friends in the "Liberal aime, The Satanic Verses was written in order to "break orthodox taboos" – to shatter the myth of the Prophet's recently, he asked Muslims to believe that his novel was pur intended to be offensive. Can we take him seriously?

In contrast, Muslim protesters have maintained a remarkably suistent stance throughout the last two years or so. What is used is wrong and eternally so. Our demands have been simple and modest. Muslims have believed sincerely in the truth of their last, they have behaved magnanimously and mercifully.

his now widely recognised that Muslims are the best readers of The Satanic Verses. The Liberal Inquisition does not know him, it merely pretends to despise it while secretly admiring it. Whe of Rushdie's literary supporters have the kind of multi-lin-palscholarship required for any proper reading of a book written that a dozen languages. As for the so called experts on Islam half a dozen languages and assess the nature of their own faith reall, their days are numbered. After Rushdie orientalism is not metaly irreverent, but irrelevant.

In the current climate of confrontation, there can be no neutral or apolitical uses of any piece of writing on Islam. This is necessarily true of a book that has wounded an entire civilisation. Indeed, deciding precisely how much of the surrounding political context should be read into the text of Rushdie's novel is itself a political, not literary, judgement.

The days of imposed leadership and expertise are over. Our religious scholars are the creators of our past; our thinkers are the creators of our present; our pure-hearted young men and momen are the hope of our future. The rest do not count in our battle. They are, as Nietzsche would say, merely mankind.

The Rushdie affair has proved that, to Muslims, books matter and that there is a book around that can still move mountains. "Mahound," Rushdie's character, "wrote a book" that has continued to topple the dynasties for centuries. As the Germans say, one is afraid of the fellow who writes one book in a life-time,

not the one who writes one every year. The West, for all its claims to intellectual achievement, does not see scholarship and knowledge as anything more than a means to secular power. Islam, the intellectual religion par excellence, knows the true value of the scholar's ink.

In any case, we Muslims have consistently given a clear message, saying nothing merely out of malice and leaving nothing unsaid merely out of cowardice. For if the trumpet gives an uncertain sound, who shall prepare for battle? It is for us to state our case, not pleading for any help except from Allah - our only Lord and Patron. And victory is near.

Source: Africa Events, 7/2, February 1991.

## A Testimony: Rushdie's Commercialized Blasphemy

by Ali A. Mazrui

... Salman Rushdie has "distanced" himself from some of his characters in *The Satanic Verses*. He has dissociated himself from the blasphemy of the characters he has created. Would you agree that is a major concession to the sensibilities of Muslims?

Verbal distancing from blasphemy is easier than financial "distancing". I assume Salman Rushdie is still collecting royalties from new sales of *The Satanic Verses*. How can that be regarded as "dissociation" from the blasphemy of the novel? Rushdie is still gaining from commercialized blasphemy...

Salman Rushdie recently announced that he has converted to Islam and therefore he should automatically be forgiven for the offence he committed against Islam. That is the death fatwa should be lifted as well. Some Muslims have doubted his sincerity, arguing that he only announced his conversion in order to save his skin. What are your comments?

It would be difficult to dispute his sincerity if he was indeed to forego millions of earnings from *The Satanic Verses*. If he made such a sacrifice, we would have to give him the benefit of the doubt.

As for the fatwa, the Ayatullahs in Iran and other Muslims we taken the position that what is done cannot be undone by "I am sorty". Under Western law, remorse is not a reason of the position of the position that what is done cannot be undone by a more punishing an offender either. What Western traitor or the position of the position of the position of the position that what is done cannot be undone by a more properties.

Africa Events (London), 7/2, February 1991, p. 39.

# Nihilistic, Negative, Satanic

by Syed Ali Ashraf

tablic has written a negative satire on life. It is nihilistic. There is apositive norm. Love is presented as either sentimentality or lust. Visitness dominates. Angels and Satan and the devils are number fabrications. Religious consciousness is shown only as appropriate the sentimental constitution.

Rushdie then goes to the highest domain and tries to pull it down to prochat the Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him) was not at all the priet man history tells us of. He sides with the orientalists because this convenient for him so that he can distort history as much as it wishim to do so. That is why he concocts a new kind of myth and unsatexual pervert into an angel but an angel who himself does not how what message he pours into the heart of the Prophet.

his obvious thus that Rushdie is not interested in presenting a accreexploration into reality. He is interested in proving a theory of its own. The theory is a simple one. It is just disbelief in higherhood, in the coming of 'revelations' from God and in the refection of humanity in the life and character of Prophet Mammad, peace and blessings of God be upon him. In order to do a Rushdie picks up the myth of the so-called Satanic Verses — which have a life picks up the myth of the so-called Satanic Verses — which have alleged to have put into the mouth of the Blessed Prophet and with he cancelled later on being informed from God. No authentic him scholar has recorded this and many great Islamic scholars are rejected it as a fabrication of the Makkan unbelievers who was this rumour in order to cast doubt into the minds of newly have and other people about the very authenticity of all

revelations which, the Blessed Prophet claimed, to have been brought down to him by Archangel Gabriel. Rushdie has taken it as true and lost his faith in the authenticity of the revelations. Probably it is better to say that he never had any faith whatsoever, nor does he seem to be a person who has even tried to explore religious consciousness.

What is most satanic in this venture of Rushdie is that he has written this novel to satirise the Prophet and his Companions, to ridicule religious consciousness of people, to remove from the hearts of people any sense of reverence for angels, prophets, holy books, and hence any faith in God and the Hereafter. He has intentionally and deliberately distorted the history of the Blessed Prophet and his Companions though he has retained the names of the Companions and chosen the name that vicious missionaries in the Middle Ages used to give to the Prophet (peace be upon him) only in order to tell people that he was not writing history.

Here we are faced with a fundamental problem. If some writer uses my name and the names of some of my friends and also selects some situations and incidents of my life and distorts them and vilifies them do I not have the right to charge that person for slander and deformation? Should not the Muslim community have the right to condemn this man, for blasphemy because he is using a thin veil of a fiction in order to vilify the Prophet and all that they hold dear to them? As the author is not interested in presenting his own realisation of any truth, as he is preaching an anti-Islamic theory in the guise of a novel, his liberty as a writer ends and he should be treated as anyone producing blasphemous writing is treated.

The method that he has adopted to achieve his goal is also confusing and unsuccessful from the literary point of view. How could the two characters Gibreel (Gabriel) and Saladin fall from the sky and still be alive? How could they get transformed and how could they become normal again? How could they have the normal human body and how could they at the same time move about and influence people across space and time?

Rushdie tried to learn some Sufistic terminology and some Hindu and Buddhistic terms and started playing with them in a childish way. He wanted to be realistic and fantastic at the same time. Where he failed miserably is in portraying people's feelings when they see the transformation of Saladin or Gibreel as if these are normal things. In a normal situation these abnormal things do not happen. In a fairy tale they do. His attempt to mix normalcy and fairy tale myths created by

carry conviction. Had we been transported into an world completely, as C.S. Lewis does in children's tales or are in fairy tales, it would have been convincing.

absortion of history jars on the sensibility of the people Prophet and his Companions are not mythical figures and the mythologised in the manner in which he has tried to use what as the Muslim readers are concerned this distortion hurts wasse of their awareness of the historicity of the Prophet and wause of their normal religious sensibility which makes them and the lies told by Rushdie are not just fictitious things, they are wate insults. Rushdie knew fully how he would be upsetting the rader but he could care least about them. He listened to incantations and tried his best to make the non-Muslims advisiand the historic connotations of the Muslim figures. From wixay point of view, therefore, he attempted to dissociate the implications and the age-old connotations of the images of Apphet and his wives and his Companions and impose upon them n bisonically false and pejorative implications. The difference greathe use of history and myths as symbols by a far far superior 73. [S. Eliot, and Rushdie will indicate why Rushdie fails while in acceeds.

Ext. for example, has used the Christian myth of the Holy Grail in share Land. He did not destroy the feeling of sanctity that the worstory of the Holy Grail arouses in the mind of the reader. On arterhand he adds a new meaning to the traditional meaning by through indirect implication the holiness that modern station has almost lost, the holiness that is at the root of human the holiness that we are seeking and continuously being and from reaching. Thus this Christian image provided a zerox of reference and creates a depth, gives it universality, is people through the spiritual tradition of all great religions. on the other hand spurned the normal historical spiritual that the Prophet and his Companions would rouse in the the reader. He jumped into the arena of vicious missionaries Atteologians of the Middle Ages of Europe, uses the name they Mahound', selected the falsely ascribed 'Satanic verses' and his book as 'The Satanic Verses', laughs at the traditional of piety and holiness that the image of Gabriel rouses in People's minds and thereby arrogantly cuts himself off from (la religio-mystical-spiritual traditions of this world and tries to

depend upon the images supplied by superstitions about the homed Devil, by pseudo-mystical mystifying magical images of Rekha Merchant on the carpet penalising Gibreel and the pseudo-saint Ayesha and her sexual satisfaction with the neo-angelic Gibreel coming from nowhere, a Gibreel who himself thinks that something is happening through him which he himself is surprised to find. At the lowest level religion for him is what Ayesha symbolises. At the highest level religious consciousness is nothing but the machinations of a self-made Prophet or Imam, Rushdie thus dissociates himself completely from the spiritual-cum-religious-cum-moral traditions of mankind and tries arrogantly to assert his own interpretations of Prophethood, revelations, angels, devils. He is too much of a product of the mechanical hu-ha of today and not a person with any insight into Reality or human nature.

Rushdie is thus a practitioner of black magic who turns things upside down. Does he see anything great or good in human nature? Rushdie succeeds in portraying a large number of characters of which the two are the most prominent. Gibreel and Saladin. The characterisation of the Prophet and his Companions is highly twisted and incompetent. In his attempt to theorise and present a distorted version of history it was not possible for him to have any norm of behaviour which would show, as sometimes he wanted to, a conflict between good and evil. It is his incapacity to understand or respond to human greatness that makes him highly confused. Men and women may be led by superstition but Religion is not superstition. Ayesha and her followers are destroyed by their false beliefs which they sincerely held. This type of religiosity is present in human society but this should have been presented as an aberration and not genuine religious sentiment or beliefs. As against this type of pseudo-religion presented as religion, he does not present any truly religious character or even a predominantly 'good' (to use the Aristotelian concept) character in the whole novel. When the Prophet and his Companions are confused or corrupt or hypocritical like politicians where can he find a really 'good' character?

There is thus no relief in this novel. It is mentally disturbing, almost paranoic in its love of a corrupt society. To use his own words it is 'locus classicus of incompatible realities. Lives that have no business mingling with one another sit side by side upon the omnibus' of his novel. 'One universe, on a zebra crossing, is caught for an instant, blinking like a rabbit, in the headlamps of a motor

#### The Muslim Argument

which an entirely alien and contradictory continuum is to fifthat is his only intention in writing this novel, he may be succeeded in presenting such contradictions in human was strength as a novelist lies in his ability to portray such as when we go a bit deeper into his characterisation we nearly all these characters are repeating the same side of the sum of the same side of passions and lust when the same relieved by a desire to struggle with the same side with the same side of the same side

International, 28th October-10th November 1988, pp.16-17.

14th February 1989

Lee Ambassador of the United States Lema in Pakistan, Lema Embassy,

Memorandum to the US Ambassador in Pakistan

In Excellency:

ben so treated in civilized society. But vilification of a has ben so treated in civilized society. But vilification of a has family and his companions is a far more heinous crime. It is a some standard that cover of freedom of expression can never be condoned. It is the every society has some kind of a law of libel and some and so protect the honour of the living and the dead.

Adminious book has been written by Salman Rushdie, which whiched by Penguin/Viking from London last year and has just have by Viking from the U.S.A. under the title "The

Satanic Verses". This book contains vicious attacks, abominable falsifications, and calumnious and slanderous statements against Prophet Abraham (a Prophet in whom all believers in Judaism Christianity and Islam believe) and Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), his respected wives (who are more sacred in the eyes of all Muslims than their own mothers) and a number of close companions of the Prophet, who represent for the Muslims the noblest specimens of humanity. The whole book is an exercise is scandalous vilifications causing gross provocation to all followers of Islam. The Muslims all over the world have rightly protested against this gross and wanton outrage. There have been protests in a large number of Muslim and Western countries and the book has been banned in India, Pakistan, Malaysia, Sudan, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Vatican and other countries. The fact that this vicious book has been published and is being projected by Western media is an affront not only to the Muslim conscience but to the good sense of the entire civilized world. We therefore take this opportunity to protest on its publication in the U.S.A. and hope that the government and the people of the U.S.A. shall not let such a sacrilege be inflicted upon the Muslim people from the U.S.A. If this book is not withdrawn by the publishers forthwith, the Muslim World is justified in treating this as an act of war against their faith and community and demand from all Muslim and other sympathetic governments to apply economic sanctions against the publishers by banning the entry of all their publications in their respective countries.

While we respect the values of freedom of opinion, belief and expression and we welcome honest dissent, not only in respect of political issues but also in matters relating to religion and culture, no one has a right to broadcast in the name of literature outright lies, vicious calumnies and deliberate fabrications and distortions of facts. There are certain values that must be respected by all and there are certain limits beyond which no civilised society can allow complete minds to deprave the minds and morals of the innocent and uninformed humans. Commitment to freedom is fundamental but commitment to truth is more fundamental.

We, therefore, request Your Excellency to convey the feelings of the Muslim people of Pakistan to your government and your people and to see what can be done to develop some kind of a protocol of whose basis such vicious attacks on any prophet or religious leadel belonging to any religious tradition could be checked. If libel against

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of any living person is a crime, libel against those and spiritual leaders who have transformed the lives of thuman beings and who are respected and loved by people unthey love their own self and their parents is a much greater comething must be done to check this outrage against

applogists of The Satanic Verses say that it is a work of The fact is that the media of fiction has been used to make statements against a great religion and its leaders and the musin an interview published in British newspapers on 10th in Sept. 1988, clearly confessed that "In this dream sequence, and to offer my view of the phenomenon of revelation, the of a great world religion and that view is that of a secular man In Islamic culture has been of central importance all his life." anticlear that the powerful medium of fiction has been wantonly inhuse and vilify the Islamic religion and its venerated prophet dr leaders. The anguish and the anger of the Muslim World as more sympathetic concern in the Western world if it realizes Fothip between people belonging to different cultures cannot minuted on political expediency; it can be sacred only if there enterstanding of each others' values and sympathy and respect religions and cultures of different communities.

WABZADA NASRULLAH (HAFIZ HUSSAIN AHMAD) M.N.A. KHAN) Member, National Assembly

M.N.A. Immer Prime Minister of Pakistan

(M.N.A.)

BLAMMUSTAFA JATOI) (MAULANA KAUSAR NIAZI) Former Minister of Information, Pakistan

(MAULANA ABDUL SATTAR (AGHA MURTAZA POOYA) NIAZI) M.N.A. Minister of Religious Affairs. Pakistan

Member of the then III and publisher of the newspaper The Muslim

(PROF. KHURSHID AHMAD) Senator Former Minister and Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission, Pakistan

Return of the 'Metaphor' Man: Mr. Rushdie, Forget Yourself, You Are Not the Issue!

Lecturing to unwary but carefully selected invitees at New York's Columbia University, the author, Salman Rushdie, announced that he had authorised the publication of his sacrilegious title, 'The Satanic Verses'. The 400 invitees, writers, journalists and broadcasters, had been passed through metal detectors to attend a banquet commemorating the 200th anniversary of the First Amendment which is supposed to guarantee all kinds of freedom of speech.

Brought out by his 'liberal' minders and surrounded by guards, Rushdie was upbeat. He spoke for 20 minutes. He compared himself to Western hostages and demanded that Western governments should apply an equal measure of pressure for his 'release' as they had done to get out their own men. 'For many people I've ceased to be a human being I've become an issue', he lamented before his American audience.

He had gone to the US to impress the point that any improvement in relations with Iran should depend on 'lifting the Fatwa' issued by the late Ayatullah Khomeini, and 'cancelling the offer of a bounty'.

of the reward 'would take the professionals and the soldiers of fortune, out of the picture'. 'I can deal lew people who did not accept that the decree was revoked' might see me as a target. But I cannot deal with terrorism on

and, he assured his American friends that he had never the Satanic Verses' and he wanted that it 'must be milable and easily affordable, if only because if it is not read then these years would have no meaning'.

smooth of December seems to have become some kind of man Rushdie when he undergoes a immelamorphosis, when he casts his old skin and takes a new beember 1990, he announced he had 'embraced Islam' and would neither 'publish the paperback edition' nor 'permit any runements for translations into other languages' - for as long mink of further offence exists'. As for the continued for its ahad and pulping ... Well, you know ... 'It was not offensive entanten to be offensive'. It was 'a serious work of art'! anyone was conned by this 'embracing' of Islam or the arms of the paperback edition of 'The Satanic Verses': except wher fanatical literati and the Egyptian minister of Awgaf, Dr. and two Egyptian Imams of the London Central

kont-liberal literati had been angered because they assumed The protege had betrayed them and become a Muslim, even metherhair-lady of the Rushdie Defence Committee, Frances de in medio assure these angry liberals that 'Salman Rushdie feels generally that he has not necessarily changed his position'. le minister from Cairo had probably been conned, but the tased in London, had shown over-enthusiasm and poor though few thought they had not done so in good faith. and gone to witness a ceremony where Rushdie signed a and they assumed it was a declaration

Is in Britain who are close to the scene and who have faced In of a long anti-Muslim campaign of vituperation and were, however, in no doubt that this was simply another bloy' to get himself off the hook. This 'embracing' of as meaningless as his earlier 'regrets' over the publication of his profane novel. (He was 'sorry' to hear that people had felt offended!).

When he wrote the book, Rushdie claimed to be an insider, that he had done it with a view to secularise Islam. Then he became legalistic. He said he had 'lapsed' from his Islam and he was not a Muslim when he had written the book. Therefore, he argued, the Islamic punishment of sacrilege against the person of the Prophet (peace be upon him) should not be applied against him.

December 1990, Rushdie was 'calling' himself Muslim, albeit not a 'perfect' Muslim. September 1991, he began going through another ecdysis. Call me 'a Church of England Muslim', he told The Guardian (21 September 1991). He had begun apologising and explaining his 'embracing' of Islam. It wasn't 'my' idea, he said. It had been suggested to him as a possible way out of his situation to 'pretend' even though he did not understand 'the idea of God and after-life'. He 'was very low at this time'.

December 1991, Rushdie had regressed to his true self from which he had been pretending to have come out. Apparently he felt still more 'low' and flew out to New York under a false name (with both British Passport Office and the American Visa Office collaborating in this forgery) in order to pour his heart out at a Yankee dinner. Why New York? Probably because he thought America can provide the best arms and logistics support in his fight against 'Existing Islam'. Also because, Tehran is now seeking to make up with Washington

and would be amenable to US pressures. And New York is the best place from where to put pressure on the White House.

The British and American hostages 'are now free' said a New York Times editorial (12 December), 'so there is no longer any justification for inhibiting the free speech of those who wish to protest Iran's call for the murder of a British subject'. 'Today let it be said again that writing, translating or publishing a book is not a capital crime. If Western governments fail to make that plain, then more lives are in

mortal peril'.

The New York Times warning came the morning after Rushdie's speech. Here in Britain, the foreign secretary, Douglas Hurd, has had one unannounced meeting with Rushdie. Rushdie described the meeting as 'good and substantial' and is looking forward to see the foreign secretary a second time. He wants that any redefinition of 'Britain's national interest' must include him too. Surely there is some orchestration in this renewed liberal crusade and may be there

with the official Muslim world in a lower 'low' than a house is improbable.

Rushdie may want to think he is the 'issue', that has the case. He did commit a capital crime in the eyes of law, but that was outside the jurisdiction of that law. Akkhomeini's Fatwa or the totally unpublicised Fatwa of the Med Council of Islamic Jurists headed by Shaikh Baz were misof the obvious: the legal position known even to the most Muslim. It did not add to their knowledge, nor their Argal' is going to make any difference. Islamic law is not nor it is open to any priestly dispensation. Rushdie's of threat comes from his own guilt consciousness, but it is of point out that for the four months before the issue of audhis going into hiding, he had been there somewhere around Labury Comer and if no Muslim tried to approach him or even and his address, in order 'to improve his manners', as the Ju Lord Dacre, put it aptly, it was not out of ignorance of alworcowardice. It was an act of deliberate policy on the part tommunity's leadership that the person should be left and within the jurisdiction of the British law because things attroutside human jurisdiction are dealt with by God Himself, & Own Way. No Muslim is thinking about Rushdie and it is and that he is going to be killed by anyone, much less by a one cannot know what will happen to him, but execution dikanact of mercy and not punishment. If God has preserved nofu, there must be some superior reason behind it.

hisseis not Rushdie. He is just an individual. The issue is the madpublication of 'The Satanic Verses', in any form, language and the publishers, Viking-Penguin, owe it to the common of decency and propriety that they cease publication and thus and pulp all the editions of their most filthy and profane and the first in the principle of civility in human communication and stop the principle of freedom of expression. The principle of

is going to be upheld eventually. Insha-Allah!

Impact International, 13th December 1991-9th January 1992.

# Blasphemer's Progress, in Hell! Playing Stooge to His Friends and Minders

As to those who reject the Faith
It is the same to them
Whether thou warn them or do not warn them;
They will not believe.
Allah has set a seal on their hearts and
on their [faculty of] listening
And on their eyes is a cover;
Great is the penalty they [incur].

The Qur'an, Al-Baqarah 2: 6-7 (in translation of the meaning)

If you learn nothing, you regret nothing. After four years of living the life of a mouse, Salman Rushdie does not regret writing such a book, or at least he pretends so. 'A clever person, Muslim-bred, who studied Islam at Cambridge', why did he write such an offensive book?

Rushdie's response has varied. It all depends on the circumstances. It was a fantastic piece of magical realism. No, it was a piece of fiction. It is a book about the traumas of immigration into a different culture. Actually it was something profound aimed at reforming and secularising Islam from within!

When The Satanic Verses was published he defended its profanities from the position of someone who claimed to knowlslam. Someone who had studied Islam at Cambridge! When the going got bad, he said why be so serious about something which was merely a story? He never admitted his ignorance or arrogance, or that he word-processed all the previous anti-Islamic filth of his peers. He had expected — and was probably told — that it was going to earn him both fame and money. He has achieved both, albeit in a perverted sense, and yet he 'is sick and tired of people saying I should have known'!

In any case Rushdie has not been known as someone for his culture, loyalty or 'liberality with truth'. His first wife Clarissa Luard, a non-person now, is keeping a tight lip, but his second wife.

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Wiggins, who went into hiding with him, only to separate, a coward and self-obsessed'. Wiggins is not alone in quehdie in such a light.

issued an 'apology' a few months after Ayatullah fatwa. He now tells the truth.

by the shadows, 7 February 1993).

was no insistence here by Rushdie on exercising his freedom be own thoughts. 'I was under political pressure. I do not disgenerally known how heavy this pressure was. The issue of such hostages kept cropping up. I was asked to make some sort industrial that it was hinted, would be my fault'.

Isolic was not really sorry for what he had done. The British community had no problem in dismissing the 'apology' as the dismission of the continued publication of islamic Verses. Since the ruse did not work, Rushdie's minders and to reverse the gear. Rushdie was asked to 'disappear': 'Now was sofficial pressure on me simply to disappear'. Dutifully he need the order.

Itall do not know the full story of Rushdie's 'embracing' of in buthat is what the world was told on Christmas Eve 1990. It withoutly an elaborate set-up. A witless Egyptian minister of reductive up the was conveniently found visiting Paris for odd the cup the was enticed to London 'to witness the greatest motion' of the century'. The minister commandeered two symmems at the Islamic Cultural Centre and the caravan of six toketally all Egyptians – were taken to a hotel where they all maningless statement written by Rushdie, only to the burthal Rushdie had not meant to return to Islam.

Vainne Wiggins, Rushdie's separated wife later disclosed that in imbracing' Islam, Rushdie was to be taken to Cairo to be similarly be Shaikh of Al-Azhar. President Husni Mubarak would with him to Col. Qadhafi. Having been blessed by the 'Muslim adembraced by two powerful 'Islamic leaders', one moderate him west and the other radical and 'anti-West', the ordeal of

Rushdie as well as its minders would have come to a happy end That is how the whole thing appears to have been constructed by the team of 'Islamic experts' around 'the Rushdie problem', Rushdie

himself took great pains to explain why he was 'embracing' and not 'accepting' Islam. He offered to donate 'as generously as I can' to the families of 25 who were killed by police firing in India and Pakistan while protesting against the publication of his book; even set up some

kind of a trust for Islam or Muslims!

Take me as an imperfect Muslim, he said to Muslims. Take me as a 'Church of England Muslim', he told his disappointed Christian and Jewish admirers. But this 'imperfect' 'Church of England Muslim' was not willing to withdraw his filthy book and Muslims refused to be cheated or bribed. The U.K. Action Committee on Islamic Affairs rejected 'the whole thing as a disingenuous ploy to bail-out the unrepentant author of The Satanic Verses without meeting any of the concerns of the Muslim community'.

'I was a fool', Rushdie told Hunter Davies of The Independent (The real life of Salman Rushdie, 11 February). 'I was pretty low. I regret none of my words and actions - except that'. However, Rushdie's unsolicited statement that 'No one prompted him [to 'embrace' Islam]', made it all the more unbelievable!

'That was an attempt to get inside the religion' because Islam desperately needs to develop a secular face with Western assistance, he confided to The Times (11 February 1993). But he warned: 'If there is anywhere where secular Muslims have existed, it's Bosnia. But fundamentalists have been in there preaching fundamentalism before they hand out the Kalashnikovs. Ten years from now you're going to have a fundamentalist state at the frontier of Europe and people will say: "Where did that come from?"

Rushdie had been quite upbeat, that is until the Iranian leader Avatullah Khamenei chose to override official equivocations in Tehran and announced that the fatwa on Salman Rushdie 'must be implemented without a doubt, and it shall be implemented'. It may not, but by playing stooge to his friends and minders, Rushdie has

chosen to stay in his own hell.

Source: Impact International, 12th March-8th April 1993.

#### The Muslim Argument

# 0 & A The Muslim Case

W Filss About Fatwa Evades the Real Issue -Sacrilege

Muslim case against the publication of The Satanic his been lucid and logical. It has been stated fully and as often hough very little of this has been reflected in the very and supposedly upholds freedom of expression and opposes tho of any kind. Public memory is otherwise short and since acquestions kept cropping up from time to time, as if they had matealt with before, we asked Iqbal Sacranie, to answer them Tew readers. Iqbal Sacranie is Joint Convenor of the umbrella Action Committee on Islamic Affairs, which has been futing the Muslim campaign against sacrilege.

. Or did Muslims take such a strong offence to The Satanic We You could have totally ignored it, but you made it made it history's best-selling fiction?

- Judon't want me to repeat all the abuse and filth that the book muldam in order to show how it defiles Islamic sanctities and Muhammad (peace be upon him), his wives and companions mild be pleased with them all). It does not spare from its dirty molod, Abraham (peace be upon him) and even some Hindu

-but neither the Christians, nor Jews or Hindus have shown strong reaction against the book?

Mean't speak for others, but anyone familiar with Islam knows Allalam an-Nabi, uttering words of insult against Muhammad the upon him), is a capital crime. The crime is of rare Darance but whenever such an offence has been committed, the society has dealt with it in a salutary manner.

Mercare no two views about the seriousness of the offence caused hamlegious book. The entire Ummah is united in its sense of

and its rejection of the filthy title.

reason is that the Islamic society derives its legitimacy and its from Muhammad (peace be upon him). You believe and you All Islam on the basis that the Message revealed by God through him was a true Message and that he conveyed the Message truly and faithfully.

Many were upset when Muhammad (peace be upon him) told the Makkans that God had asked him to invite them and all mankind to obey no deity except God, because He was the Only Deity - Master of the Universe and the Day of Judgement; Provider and Sustainer of life; All-Knowing and All-Seeing; Kind and Merciful; and their King and Law-Giver.

The Makkans were upset at the thought of having to give up their corrupt habits and unjust privileges that they had arrogated to themselves in the name of their many gods and deities. They were surprised how could Muhammad (peace be upon him) expect them to give up the religion of their forefathers. They offered him wealth and power, if he was after power and riches. No one, however, questioned the truthfulness or integrity of the Messenger (peace be upon him) but no one could say that Muhammad (peace be upon him) because he had lived among them for 40 years and they had known him as a person of absolute trust and honesty, as a sincere and truthful person, who had no malice towards anybody and who had no axe to gind. Those who were arguing with him were in fact struggling against their own petty egos and base desires, but few had any question about the authenticity of the Messenger (peace be upon him) or the truthfulness of the Message.

In Islam the relationship between the Message and the Messenger (peace be upon him) is integral and, therefore, all through history one finds an ongoing exercise to cast doubt upon the person and

personality of Muhammad (peace be upon him).

# Q - Is that why the Message and the Messenger (peace be upon him) are beyond criticism?

A — We are not talking about criticism, we are talking about abuse. Islam does not allow its followers to abuse the deities of other people even though it may not regard them as true. Criticism is one thing, abuse another. Criticism opens minds, while abuse is the product of a closed mind.

There are libraries of books critical of Muhammad (peace be upon him) as well as of Islam and Muslims have never refused to read or answer them, but to accept abuse and profanity is quite different. You can't answer abuse with abuse. It is against Islamic culture and Islam does not allow it, it draws a line between argument and abuse. Every

nend a so-called liberal society, has its concept of treason and and reserves its highest punishment for the offence.

It hardly any dispute that The Satanic Verses is deeply

the hardly any dispute that The Satanic Verses is deeply the not just to Muslims, but to all people who believe in and distributed values.

# Aboretheless what was the point in making it a famous

La recould have ignored the book, provided we had chosen to what in the sand like an ostrich. Shatam an-Nabi is a crime the entire Ummah, but here in Britain we had a book, much and exceptionally touted by the media, literati and critics, as fiction, but as a book that opened the long-awaited door to be of Islam 'from within'

ight may be a foreign language in distant shores far from many simountries, but for the British Muslim community here, it was spage of their education and social intercourse; mother tongue the rewer generation. The book was going to find a place in the satural system, and young, unknowing and impressionable and thindern were going to be asked to do projects or otherwise at the fully book. So even if we had ignored it, the book was not the fully book is the fully book.

Minier, as a result of Muslim representation, many education comiss agreed neither to purchase *The Satanic Verses* for their bind library Services nor advise its selection for school's own with the were also able to convince many of the examining comiss not to include the book in their syllabi.

I four mere also 'trying to act as a thought police', to gag a makinght to freedom of expression.

but context the word freedom has been most abused by the mains of The Satanic Verses. What is being sought is anarchy

People are free to think, to act and to express themselves within their own private environment as long as they do not tread on other people's toes. Even privacy is subject to observance of certain rules and laws, the infringement of which invite the wrath of law.

The Satanic Verses is not about freedom. It is abuse of freedom Every rule or law that is there in any society represents a curtailment of some kind of freedom. The reason is simple: freedom can only be exercised within secure boundaries, secured by law and morality, The social and economic malaise that we witness today, especially in Britain, are the direct result of the coming down of the borders of civility and morality.

People have freedom to choose to go to Hell, but they cannot be permitted to have freedom to take others along with them.

### Q - What do you want? What do you seek to achieve?

A - Our position from the Day One has been very clear, and it remains unchanged. We said that a person may choose to write out the complexes of his psyche, but a publisher is a responsible person. It is not right for him to publish and sell filth and profanity.

We have, therefore, been asking the publishers to: 1. Withdraw and pulp all the copies and editions of The Satanic

Verses.

2. To undertake not to publish in any form or manner any editions or translations of the book.

3. To tender an unqualified apology to Muslims, and

4. To pay damages to an agreed charity.

We have asked the OIC (Organisation of the Islamic Conference) countries to:

1. Ban the book in their respective countries.

2. To ask the publishers to implement the above demands.

3. To adopt economic sanctions against the publishers and their

holding companies, in case they failed to do so.

We are asking the British government to provide some legal mechanism which would prevent recurrence of any such profanity against the sanctities of all major and defined faiths and deal with it when such an infringement takes place. The present situation is clearly iniquitous and it is only right that Parliament filled this gaping hole in its social law before we are caught by another explosion of social commotion.

The fundamental principle that we seek to establish is fundament-

#### The Muslim Argument

ommunications in human society should be guided by of civility - and that's all! If it is criminal to abuse and individual, abusing and defaming revered religious should also be a cognizable offence. We are talking hose and not about banning criticism.

contact is the progress?

The Satanic Verses publishers are sitting tight in their and they have nothing but disdain and contempt

NOIC states seem to agree with us. On our request they adopted Whalion on Islamic Sanctities' at their foreign ministers' mine in Riyadh in 1989. The following year in Cairo, the foreign ministers backed up the Riyadh Declaration by a resolution. It was reiterated in 1991 at the Istanbul dence of Islamic foreign ministers and the Islamic summit france in Dakar the same year. The U.K. Action Committee on Affairs was represented at all these meetings except at

In Salanic Verses issue has become part of the international genda. However the problem with the OIC is not with its stations, which are well-meant, the problem lies with their manation. Why is this so is one thing, but one can see that the arosand up for the dignity of Islam and Muhammad (peace be mim) has cost the Muslim world a total loss of credibility.

It sets knew that if a grouping of 51 'sovereign and impodent' states could feel so inadequate as to take a routine on against a mere publishing company, it would feel still more stand to act against their military aggression in Bosnia.

lon't think one can blame the publishers much. They are in to make money. If blasphemy sells, they will sell And civility too, if that was good business. The smart all both! The British government officials we are in touch he described as 'understanding', but there are said to be only in defining and drafting an inclusive anti-sacrilege Which religions and how to define a religion? Is delatanism a religion? If not, why not?

there is the more important question of the political will Milical climate. In a social climate where there is a marked Wolfbelief, the Muslim concern about blasphemy seems strange

We don't see an early breakthrough, but since what we are talking is common sense and common civility, we are sure that the day after, if not tomorrow this position will be upheld.

# Q - You have not mentioned Ayatullah Khomeini's fatwa?

A - We have been talking so far in the context of British Muslim concern about The Satanic Verses, which is about the book and not its author. Ayatullah Khomeini's fatwa states the Islamic legal position about punishing the insulter of the Prophet (peace be upon him). It is not the Ayatullah's personal opinion. The Makkah-based Islamic Figh Academy which comprises leading jurists and scholars of the Islamic world had come to the same opinion independently.

Muslims in Britain have all along been aware of this Islamic legal position, yet, notwithstanding the extreme and continuing provocation, they have not taken the British law into their hands. If they had done so, the Ayatullah would not have had the occasion even to issue his fatwa.

The British government is well within its legal right to afford Salman Rushdie all the physical protection he needs. But it should not mean giving protection to The Satanic Verses as well.

British government ministers, however, seem to have been wrongly advised in conducting their Rushdie campaign in the way they have been doing so. They have not helped their ward by aggravating the situation and they have shown great indifference to the hurt felt by the Muslim community. Unless there is a wider agenda, it is difficult to comprehend this new offensive on behalf of Rushdie.

What occurs to us is that there is a clash between two legal values and two different jurisdictions. The global village we live in today is, therefore, in urgent need of an 'International Convention against Sacrilege' that would guide and regulate the governments as well as the writing and publishing industries. It could also clarify the question of jurisdiction, if they appear to overlan.

#### The Muslim Argument

there do you go from here? Action Committee on Islamic Affairs shall pursue its We have a moral stand and withdrawn in accordance We have a moral stand and we continue to press our temand for outlawing sacrilege and abuse of religious

publishing and otherwise. hope the publishers will eventually see the error of their We are constantly representing to the British government age of enacting appropriate legislation against religious against incitement to religious hatred and against religious sanctities. We are also persisting with the OIC adultey honour and implement their own resolutions. It seems way 10 go, but we are optimistic about the inevitable success of against profanity. Insha-Allah!

his the other day the British education secretary John Patten was more the rise in inhuman crimes like rape and murder, by even as 18 10-year-olds, and he said it was due to (1) the decline of in society and (2) the coming down of the value frontiers of This is exactly what we have been saying. We believe that and like John Patten are not in minority and we are sure the grant will eventually agree with us that protecting sacrilege is amarchy.

less Impact International, 12th March-8th April 1993.

# APPENDIX I

# Correspondence on the Affair

Letter sent by the Islamic Foundation, Leicester, 10 Muslim Organizations, Mosques, and Prominent Muslim Leaders in Britain

3rd October, 1988

Dear Brother in Islam,

Asalamu Alaykum.

lly Allah keep you in the best of health and Iman (Ameen).

This deep anguish and distress we are writing this note to draw we attention to the recently published blasphemous novel, The Samic Verses by Salman Rushdie (Penguin 1988). This work, tinly disguised as a piece of literature, not only grossly distorts to Islamic history in general, but also portrays in the worst wible colours the very characters of the Prophet Ibrahim and to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon them).

hway however be clarified that the Prophet Muhammad (peace hupon him) is referred to in this novel as 'Mahound' – a descend about him in the medieval West. The work also solutes the characters of the Prophet's Companions (Bilal, human, Farsi, Hamza, Abu Sufyan, Hind, Khalid and several human, Farsi, Hamza, Abu Sufyan, Hind, Khalid and several human, Farsi, and describes the Islamic creed and rituals in the most foul human. Some of the relevant extracts from the novel, quite human in the most for your perusal and an early action.

Based on the myth of the interpolation of the so-called 'Satanic Verses' into the Qur'an, this novel stands out as the crassest sacrilege of all that is sacred for the Muslims.

In view of the sinister nature of the novel and the irreparable damage it would inflict on the image of Islam, we request you to take a united stand on this issue and demand the authorities/publisher to withdraw this novel immediately and make a public apology for the offence caused to Islam and Muslims.

To begin with, you should kindly make it a point to record immediately your protest with the publisher, either by post or telephone, preferably both.

Postal address: Penguin Publishers, Ltd.,

27 Wrights Lane, LONDON, W.8

By telephone: 01-938 2200

(Publicity Section, Viking,

Penguin Books)

May Allah reward you for doing urgently all that is possible in this noble cause.

Wassalam.

Yours in Islam,

Dr. M.M. Ahsan, Director General Syed Faiyazuddin Ahmad, Director, Public Relations and Administration Dr. A.R. Kidwai, Research Fellow

P.S. Enclosed please find an article exploding the myth of the 'Satanic Verses'.\*

\*This article appears on pp. 131-41 of this book.

gent by the UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs,

19th October 1988

I. Glover, Minghts Lane, NOON, W8

Mr. Glover,

It are an action committee, formed to represent the major that Organisations of the United Kingdom, to respond to the attack by yourselves, of a book by Salman Rushdie, entitled by Salman Rushdie, entitled

is book has greatly offended and disgusted the Muslim Commin, not only in the United Kingdom, but also worldwide and its our desire that you should firstly offer us some sort of discussion as to why such a piece of fiction should be published take first place, completely disregarding the feelings of almost without missing worldwide and secondly, that you should cease

tenderstand that there have already been death threats made said the Author (Daily Telegraph, 12/10/1988) and although renderin such violent reactions, it must be realised that certain patts will be so angered by the book that they may well decide take such drastic steps. We are therefore concerned that the remained sale of this book may incite much unwanted violence, the we all want to avoid and we hope you will take serious reductation of this point.

we understand that there are moves afoot to begin a total in the Muslim countries of all the publications of Penguin

and its subsidiaries or sub-publishers and again we would hope that you would not take such a thing too lightly.

It is also hoped that we may be able to resolve this matter without having to meet in person with yourselves, but if you desire a meeting, please contact us to arrange it.

Yours sincerely,

Iqbal Sacranie, Joint Convenor

N.B. We are also sending a protest signed within 1/2 hour after Friday congregational prayer at the Central Mosque in London. This is only a specimen of what may follow from the hundreds of other mosques.

(c) Reply to UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs from Viking

24th October 1988

Mr Iqbal Sacranie Joint Convenor UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs 146 Park Road London NW8 7RG

Dear Mr Sacranie,

Thank you for your letter of 19th October and the petition of protest included with it. We have noted their contents.

light softly for any distress the book has caused you and some Har fellow Muslims, but we feel your reaction is based on a of the book. We can't put it better than the reviewer datek's Listener: 'the novel doesn't debunk Islam at all but contrary endorses it as one of the "grand narratives" we ander to make sense of our experience.' Furthermore, as hiterary work the book has received the highest possible London, the Sunday Times called it 'a masterpiece' and the Indian Post characterized it as 'wondrous and these are just two of many such reviews that we could We don't expect to be able to change your mind about but we hope this goes some way towards answering goustion as to why we thought it worth publishing. You ask and book be withdrawn: we don't believe any purpose is ever and in banning books, and certainly not in this case where the ny bas already been widely circulated and widely praised. We, all Rushdie, do indeed take seriously the threats to which mider. We can only say as non-Moslems that we find it very stressing that followers of a great religion like Islam can threaten this way, and we pray that nothing comes of them. khope you are able to use your influence to prevent any further trat being issued; apart from the fact that all such threats are much to be abhorred, they surely only add to the notoriety of about and increase the public's interest in it, which is clearly with hope of the people who issue them.

ious sincerely,

ling Editorial Director

ment issued by The Penguin Group

no make it clear that, despite a number of requests from organisations and members of the public to withdraw Rushdie's novel from sale, we cannot do this. To do so

would be wholly inconsistent with our position as a serious publisher who believes in freedom of expression.

Opinions may differ about any work, but we never set out to publish with intent to offend. We certainly regret any distress the book may have caused but we believe that calling the book blasphemous and offensive to Islam is the result in many cases of a failure to read in its entirety what is, after all, a work of fiction.

The sequence most commonly cited happens, in the words of its author, "in a dream, the fictional dream of an Indian movie star, and one who is losing his mind, at that."

The Satanic Verses has been enthusiastically received by reviewers and literary critics in the countries in which it has so far appeared, namely in Britain and Canada. It is being published in nine languages around the world. It is perceived as a major and serious literary work by one of the most gifted novelists writing today in English. His earlier books have become standard works of modern literature. The Sunday Times reviewer referred to his new book as 'a masterpiece' and the reviewer in the Indian Post called it 'wondrous and uplifting'.

These are only two of hundreds of examples from newspapers, magazines and literary reviews that could be quoted. In recognition of its qualities, *The Satanic Verses* was shortlisted for the 1988 Booker Prize, Britain's foremost award for literary fiction, an award Rushdie won earlier with his novel *Midnight's Children*. The new work has just won first prize in the fiction category of the Whitbread Award.

We would only add as a general proposition that we do not believe any purpose is served by the banning of books and we vigorously defend that principle.

The Penguin Group

# APPENDIX II

mespondence with the Home Office Minister

Paten's Letter Usam Leaders in Britain

> HOME OFFICE Queen Anne's Gate London SW1H 9AT

> > 4 July 1989

unting to you, and to a number of other influential British wins, to set forth in full some of our recent thinking in the did continuing concern – focusing on, but not exclusively and to the publication of "The Satanic Verses".

Loss to be a British Muslims.

The set of race relations has been thrown into sharp relief and to have had to think deeply about our objectives and the set of the long-term importance of the consequence of the me.

Salanic Verses" had ebbed away, and that life could now an exactly as before. The Government understands how also and anxiety that book has caused, and we also

understand that insults, particularly to a deeply help ton not easily forgotten or forgiven

But we now have an opportunity to take cost

The single most important guiding principle is we must be the aim of full participation in our society is other ethnic minority groups. Modern Britan has issue for diversity and variety. But there cannot be non-for diversity and variety. But there cannot be non-for segregation. It is to the benefit of all, including themselves, that they should be part of the maintainers life. I can assure all ethnic minority groups, including that the Government will do all it can to encourage us welcome their full participation.

Since 1945, several million people from the new Commercial countries have chosen to settle in Britain or have been been into ethnic minority communities.

They have brought with them a rich and diverse because with has added to Britain's wealth of culture and tradition. Mass accome with values that can only be admired such as form to commitment to family life; a belief in hard work and correspect for the law and a will to succeed. To their crede, so have kept those values at the core of their life in Britain us.

Of course, the process of adjusting to large numbers of peace with different backgrounds has not always been straightforwed nor could one have expected it to be. And similarly, a last been easy for many people who have had to adjust to a last life very different from the one they had left behind. There are inevitable stresses and strains.

Putting down new roots in a new community does not measure severing the old. No-one would expect on indeed want broad Muslims, or any other group, to lay aside their faith. Taking or heritage. But the new roots must be put down and mass godeen, too.

Language is the most obvious example. It is quite natura and

Asian child, been in Britain, to speak their own mother longue, that child to prosper in Britain that child to prosper in Britain the or she will also have to

the bowledge of institutions, history and Muslim children should be brought or falim and well-versed in the Holy she of their parents. Nobody could or But if they are also to make the most interest as British citizens, then they must processe, of Government and the history that lies there own rights and responsibilities.

product integration in the sense of a fuller broad life does not mean forfeiting your faith or Muslims cannot and should not be expected Findus or Sikhs. Catholics or Jews. But between the should be a shared link – the link of being with all that involves.

exceptive that each group will have its own specific as of experience. But we also recognise that they exh in their proper context, within the framework at sealing we share, and against the background to create a society free from racial and sex of experience of opportunity for all.

to be a say that the particular concerns raised by the less been, for the most part, handled in say by the great majority of Muslims in this

min inderstandably upset and hurt by that book, mad fine right to protest and to express their grievance teel. The vast majority have remained within the second incommend their restraint and that of their

I am grateful, too, that Muslim leaders have made public regret for the behaviour of a very small minum peaceful demonstrations as an excuse for violent distribution of demonstrations as an excuse for violent distribution of Muslim generally, no good whatsoever, and I hope that they will continue not to be exonerated or tolerated by the remajority.

This is an appropriate occasion for me to restate the Government of the Satanic Verses". We have throughout the months been guided by two principles: the freedom of thought and expression; and the notion of the rule of the

The same freedom which has enabled Muslims to meet and protest against the book, also preserves any author's not a freedom of expression for so long as no law is broken. To see otherwise would be to chip away at the fundamental freedom which our democracy is built. That is why we have no intervene with publishers or to have "The Salana Veneremoved from bookshop shelves. Nor would we seek as such power.

So freedom of expression prevails for as long as no law is brown. It follows that we must consider whether the book is within the law.

Many Muslims have argued that the law of Blasphemy should be amended to take books such as this outside the boundary of wais legally acceptable. We have considered their arguments fully and reached the conclusion that it would be unwise far a variety of reasons to amend the law of blasphemy, not least clear lack of agreement over whether the law should be reformed or repealed.

Firstly, the difficulties in re-defining what should or should be blasphemous would be immense. People had with great passion diametrically opposing views on the subject. For example should protection be extended to all faiths, including the weaminor or very obscure? Should it extend only to faith believe in one God? Or to major or mainstream faiths only? I believe there is no equitable, just or right answer to these

a sterniton in law could lead to a rush of litigation image relations between faiths.

in important how theisive and how damaging such in the med how mappropriate our legal mechanisms with matters of faith and individual belief. Indeed, and individual belief indeed, the longer relies on it, preferring to recognise own belief is the best armour against

and the only one which Government and the protect, is that individuals should be the faith and to worship without interference, of mutual respect and toleration.

thinking is a Britain where Christians, Skhs and others can all work and live proudly their own faith and identity, but the bond of being by birth or choice,

had hope this is a message you will be able to share with

The Muslim Response

THE UK ACTION COMMITTEE ON ISLAMIC AFFAIRS
146 Park Road, London NW8 7RG

19 July 1989

The Rt. Hon. Mr John Patten, M.P. Minister of State
Home Office
50 Queen Anne's Gate
London SW1H 9AT

Dear Mr Patten,

Thank you very much for your letter dated 4 July 1989 setting forth 'in full' some of your 'recent thinking' concerning the Muslim community in Britain.

The UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs would like at the outset to assure you that as British Muslims we are concerned about the strength and stability of our country and the common welfare of all. We do share the commitment you set out to the principle that all groups must aim at full participation in our society. Muslims are not and do not seek to be a ghetto community. Ours is, as it must be, an open and outward looking community. Participation, however, cannot mean as you rightly observed forfeiting our faith, the proper practice of which, we are convinced, can only contribute to the well-being of society as a whole. Your remarks on the Muslim community's contribution to Britain's wealth and culture, its firm faith, commitment to family life, belief in hard work and enterprise, its respect for the law and the will to succeed are all apposite in this context.

We do welcome your many encouraging statements and assurances such as those on full participation, the right of people to worship in an atmosphere of mutual respect and toleration, and the soun that each group in British society will have its own sources which are of importance. However, there are a consumptions and inferences in your letter which seem and from the statement of these fine principles.

s. I can assure you, no conflict or tension between our faith and having a fluent command of English or a clear understanding of British democratic processes, assem of Government and the history that lies behind them. I can be in the society, have and responsibilities and being British, have indeed put down shat must grow deeper. However, the mere fact that you hered to refer to these self-evident truths, perhaps calling position thereby the motives and objectives of the communitation the communication gap between the Government with Muslim community.

the issue of race relations, which you highlight at the very print of your letter, we believe that it is very unhelpful to hat human relations in Britain on the basis of race and it is a misleading to see the Muslim community as an ethnic manny. Such categorizations distort a lot of perspectives and eto make racism endemic in our society; they also make for was adcreate major difficulties in the provision of essential care in the dispensing of law. We look forward to the time repole in Britain will not be classified according to the modifier skin or ethnic origin but according to their worth wanthout to the well-being of society.

and undoubtedly require fundamental changes in the attitude the makers and citizens as a whole. The quality of participation he Muslims, as indeed of others, in British society will and on the quality of rights and opportunities they are add as human beings, and as a religious community. While although the discount of the society we refel that these responsibilities will be better discharged and where necessary the legal provisions for doing accorded, not grudgingly or as a result of a process of the willingly and in a spirit of goodwill and harmony.

On the question of the sacrilegious and offensive book, "The Satanic Verses", the UK Action Committee on Islamic Affair. has sought to use all peaceful means, reason and persuasion to get the book withdrawn, to seek legal redress and to educate public opinion in Britain on the sacrilegious and mischievous nature of this publication. We will continue to do so. We certainly have not encouraged and will not encourage or condone any act of violent disorder and we condemn any criminal act or act of provocation or incitement to violence from any individual or group whether they be Muslims, agents provocateurs or police We sincerely hope that the Government and the law enforcement agencies will also condemn and deal vigorously with the acts of provocation and violence which are directed against Muslim individuals and institutions at an increasingly alarming rate in certain parts of the country in the wake of the publication of this book.

We do appreciate your statement that 'the Government understands how much hurt and anxiety that book has caused' but we find it totally incomprehensible that there is no discernible willingness on the part of the Government to take effective action against what is not only sacrilege but a calculated attempt to create public disorder and mischief by giving free rein to insult and abuse.

Instead we are repeatedly told about two guiding principles: the freedom of speech, thought, and expression; and the notion of the rule of law. All of us uphold and cherish these freedoms. But the notion that people have a 'right' to commit sacrilege and insult and abuse the deeply held sanctities of other people is extraordinary. There can be no absolute freedom of expression except in a society where there is complete absence of law or government. The notion of the rule of law and unregulated and undisciplined freedom of speech, thought and action cannot and do not go together.

The crisis over "The Satanic Verses" refuses to go away for the perfectly understandable reason that our legal framework does not envisage a situation in which an offence of sacrilege could be committed against religions other than the Anglican faith. This is why the Muslim community has been seeking the enactment of

propriate law to correct this legal deficiency. Many have to have the blasphemy laws extended to cover other faiths for the reasons that (1) such a law already existed; (2) a not put quite weighty section of the Law Commission report around the Church of England itself had agreed with the provide cover against blasphemy to Islam and other adjust faiths as well. However, it is true to say that the mommunity's demand is objective-specific; it is not considerable to the law

Is stongly feel that there is an urgent and pressing need for subton to deal with sacrilege and incitement to religious hatred at three, a need which has found support among sections of the sacrilege and incitement in this country. You would certain assumed difficulties and problems. All law-uling involves problems of definition, of scope and of implementate, but they are resolved keeping in view the objectives of the provide legislation. The real problem in this case is in fact the real problem in this case is in fact the real problem in this case is in fact the real problem in this case is in fact the real problem in this case is in fact the real problem in this case is in fact the real problem in this case is in fact the real firming this position ab initio and it has been saming and re-affirming this position without any consultation with Muslim community. We cannot say that this is satisfactory trasping in any way.

read, the Muslim community is sometimes offered equality in apply by the offer to repeal the blasphemy law altogether. It was no freedom to commit sacrilege against others faiths. It not our position that if Islamic sanctities are not protected and sacrilege, then the existing protection of the Anglican faith which also be removed. Muslims do not want to be a party to another the same and the

Tate no doubt aware, as Muslims are acutely aware, that there latitudate and powerful, and in many respects, unscrupulous of opinion in this country and in the western world who not the desirability but also regard it as a necessity to attack any Islam and Muslims but indeed religious belief and lating as such. This does not make for the freedom you campion 'to worship without interference, in an atmost mutual respect and toleration' which is the 'principle

which the Government and the law can realistically protect, Moreover, we firmly believe that the attack on religion will not only produce alienation, but erode the foundations of civilized values and society.

The Action Committee therefore wishes to reiterate its demand for a suitable enactment to criminalise abuse of and insult to religious sanctities and incitement to religious hatred. There already exist laws to deal with criminal libel and incitement to racial hatred and another identical law would not impinge on the principle of the proper exercise of the freedom of expression.

The Action Committee also requests the Government to use its good offices with the publishers to have the sacrilegious and offensive book withdrawn and thereby remove the cause of offence and help normalise community relations.

The British Muslim community greatly looks forward to playing a constructive role in the well-being and stability of the country, in the spirit of mutual respect, dignity and harmony. We therefore expect a helpful response to our acute concerns which have been brought into sharp focus in the wake of the publication of "The Satanic Verses".

We expect the dynamic processes of the law to be used to help create a society that is not only free from racial and sex discrimination but free from religious discrimination and abuse as well. For, quite frankly, there is no joy in being told that there is equal freedom for both the blasphemer and the blasphemed, the abuser and the abused.

With best wishes and kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

Iqbal Sacranie

Joint Convenor
UK ACTION COMMITTEE ON ISLAMIC AFFAIRS

isation of Islamic Conference Documents

5 November 1988

TENERAL SECRETARIAT OF THE ORGANISATION
THE SLAMIC CONFERENCE PRESENTS ITS COMPLITOTAL

tashehonour to draw urgent attention to the recent attempt
to memies of Islam to vilify the essence of our faith by
the salander against the holy prophet (peace be upon him)
to blessed companions.

has been committed by a so-called Muslim 'Salman of Indian origin residing in London. He has written a musand sacrilegious novel titled 'The Satanic Verses'. The 'Mished by Penguin, has attempted to disfigure the image 'Imphel's (peace be upon him) Sahaba, Ummahat-el-Momitals described the Islamic faith and the religious customs and out language. The enemies of Islam are not content step and are planning to acclaim the novel. It is most to note that this novel has been shortlisted for literary

have been anguished and hurt all over the world and are action. It is imperative for all the Muslim states to measures immediately and the enemies of Islam get

the message that their unholy attempts will not be tolerated. The Ummah should react collectively and firmly to this vicious attempts.

ALL THE MEMBER STATES ARE THEREFORE URGED TO TAKE THE FOLLOWING STEPS ON PRIORITY BASIS.

[A] THE NOVEL SHOULD BE BANNED IN ALL MUSLIM STATES.

[B] THE PUBLISHER SHOULD BE MADE TO WITHDRAW THIS NOVEL FROM THE MARKET, AND DESTROYITS COPIES FOLLOWED BY A PUBLIC APOLOGY.

[C] IF THE PUBLISHERS FAIL TO COMPLY, THE PUBLISHER SHOULD BE BLACKLISTED AND IMPORT OF ALL THEIR PUBLICATIONS BANNED IN THE RESPECTIVE MUSLIM STATES.

[D] THE AUTHOR OF THIS NOVEL BE BANNED FROM ENTRY INTO ANY MUSLIM STATE.

[E] WIDE PUBLICITY TO BE GIVEN TO THE MEASURES TAKEN BY THE MUSLIM STATES SO THAT IT SERVES AS A DETERRENT AND IN FUTURE THE ENEMIES OF ISLAM DO NOT ATTEMPT DENIGRATING ISLAM.

[F] THE EMBASSIES IN NON-MUSLIM STATES BE DIRECTED TO CONTACT THE GOVERNMENTS THERE TO TAKE EFFECTIVE ACTION BANNING THIS NOVEL AND ITS WITHDRAWAL FROM THE MARKETS.

The Secretary General of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, on his part, had immediately addressed to the situation. In the First Conference of Islamic Information Ministers held in Jeddah 29 Safar – 2 Rabi Al-Awal, 1409H (10–12 October 1988) he expressed indignation and anguish of the Islamic Ummah on this slanderous publication and proposed that strong measures should be taken against the author and the publishers of this malicious attack against the Holy Prophet and the sentiments of Muslims.

Secretariat avails itself of this opportunity to express of its highest consideration.

MILIARATION BY ISLAMIC CONFERENCE OF FOREIGN MINISTERS

ON

MISLAMIC ACTION TO COMBAT BLASPHEMY
AGAINST ISLAM

Indian to Conference of Foreign Ministers held in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, from 6–9 Sha'ban 1409 (March 1989) resolved to protect and safeguard the Muqadwith Sacred Book, personalities and places) of the glorious of Ummah, and maintain respect for the noble religion of the dedares:

Amphiy Allah, in His infinite mercy which encompasses andearth, has revealed the religion of Islam as a guidance maind. Islam is the religion of peace, brotherhood and main towards mankind. Tolerance is an article of faith for the main towards mankind. Tolerance is an article of faith for the main towards mankind. Tolerance is an article of faith for the main towards mankind. Tolerance is an article of faith for the main towards mankind. Tolerance is an article of faith for the main towards mankind. Tolerance is an article of faith for the main towards working to the working is dearer to Muslims than their noble religion; and Muhammad, peace be upon him, his family and wives, main personalities of Islam as well as all the Islamic the search Muqaddasat which should never be violated.

The life is and its Muqaddasat.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights stipulates inter alia that in the exercise of his rights and freedoms, man must abide by certain restrictions aimed at securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and at meeting the legitimate requirements of morality and public order. This principle is also in accord with the concept of human rights in Island.

Blasphemy against any revealed religion cannot be justified, either morally or legally on the basis of the right to freedom of thought, opinion or expression. It is indeed a most despicable act which deserves universal condemnation.

All Islamic States are resolved to coordinate their efforts in accordance with the Shariah at national, regional and international levels to effectively combat blasphemy against Islam and the slandering of Islamic personalities.

The Islamic countries strongly condemn the blasphemous book "The Satanic Verses", whose author they regard as an apostate. This publication transgresses all norms of civility and decency and is a deliberate attempt to malign Islam and the venerated Islamic personalities. There can be no doubt that the wickedness of the author has broken all rules of ethics, decency and respect for the feelings of more than a billion Muslims throughout the world and that it is a flagrant abuse of the principle of freedom of expression.

The Conference urges all Member States to ban the book "The Satanic Verses", to prevent the entry of its author in all Islamic countries and calls upon publishing houses to immediately withdraw the book from circulation and upon Member States to boycott any publishing house that does not comply.

The Conference appeals to all members of the international community to ban the sale or distribution of this book. It urges them to pass the necessary legislation to protect the religious beliefs of others and also urges publishing houses to ban the publication of any books that insult or ridicule religious sentiments.

The Conference declares that all Islamic countries shall individu-

d ollectively exert effective and coordinated efforts to state of the state of the

Resolution

Resolution No.21/19-C on the Unified Stand on Sacrilegious Acts Against Islamic Holy Places and Values

The Nineteenth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers point of Peace, Interdependence and Development), held in (m. Arab Republic of Egypt, from 9 to 14 Muharram, 14H (ls/luly-5th August 1990).

Inspired by the heavenly teachings of the Holy Quran and I live Islamic religion, the religion of mercy, brotherhood, discuss, justice and is an assurance of a good life for the limit community and mankind at large;

Emphasizing the profound veneration of the Muslims for thesenger of Islam, Mohamed (God's prayers and peace be main, the Holy Quran, the prophets, the angels, the revered solves of the prophet's family, descendants and companions with three Holy Mosques, the Holy Mosque at Makkah Makamamah, the Holy Mosque at Madina Al Munawwara with Holy Mosque of Al Aqsa and all the other Islamic holy

Convinced that the teachings of the most venerable Prophet at the ordinances of the Holy Quran as well as the sound Islamic provide the best guarantee for the good life, happiness, mentarity and successes of human society on earth and in teafer.

Declaring that according to the foundations of the Islamic striffice for the sake of preserving the sanctity of Islamic

Reaffirming and Recalling the special declaration adopted by the 18th Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers held in Riyadh on the unified Islamic stand against any insult or blasphemy, and the need to take the necessary measures to comba such acts, as referred to in the above-mentioned declaration

- 1. Condemns most vehemently, any individual or gov. ernmental stand in support of any insult directed against the sanctities of revealed religions; and take exception to disregarding such insults as are directed against moral and human principles, cultural values and the religious beliefs of the majority of people under the pretext of allowing the freedom of belief, expression and writing and respect for the principles of non-interference in the internal affairs of other states.
- 2. Reaffirms that it is the opinion of all the Ulemas that any insult, show of disrespect or slighting of the great prophets, the holy books and the holy Quran, also of the most revered Prophet, his noble family and his devoted companions, constitutes a most sacrilegious act, and those who commit such acts are definitely apostates.
- 3. Pays tribute to all zealous Muslim and non-Muslim personalities, centres, organizations and governments who, motivated by their Islamic and human obligation and being aware of their cultural message and moral principles, stood up to such violation of the religious sanctities as of divine religions.
- 4. Calls on Member States of the United Nations and all other international organizations to contribute to the preservation of the cultural heritage of all creeds.
- 5. Urges Member States to request its missions throughout the world, to follow up this important issue and to cooperate and coordinate their activities with the OIC Secretary General in this respect.
  - 6. Requests the Secretary General of the Organization of

## Appendix III

Conference, through the General Secretariat and through Assistants to follow up and carefully monitor all suspicious blasphemous manoeuvers directed against Islamic Holy and in all parts of the world in collaboration with Member

- 1. Commends the efforts of the Ministers of Culture and Annation and all affiliated institutions to draw up an Islamic amalion and cultural strategy aimed at sheltering the Islamic from enemy propaganda.
- & Urges the Member States to take the necessary meaasia respect of publishing houses and their holding companies the publishing and sale of any information material or Mations prejudicial to Islam.

A Resolution

Resolution No.28/20-C on the Unified Stand on Sacrilegious Acts Against Islamic Holy Places and Values

The Twentieth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers of Just and Durable Peace Through Dialogue and Mentalion Among Member States and Respect for International macy), held in Istanbul, Republic of Turkey from 24 to 28 Marram 1412H (4th to 8th August 1991).

Inspired by the heavenly teachings of the Holy Quran, the blamic religion, the religion of mercy, brotherhood, selfless-Musice and message to mankind at large;

Emphasizing the profound veneration of the Muslims for the Man, Messenger of Islam, Mohammed (Allah's prayers and Athe upon him), the Prophets, the angels, the revered members of Convinced that the teachings of the most venerable Prophet and the injunctions of the Holy Quran as well as the sound Islamic systems provide the best guarantee for the good life, happiness, complimentarity and successes of human society on earth and in the hereafter;

Declaring that according to the foundations of the Islamic creed, sacrifice for the sake of preserving the sanctity of Islamic holy places, are dearest and most sublime than any thing else, and stressing its absolute conviction that it is incumbent upon it to fulfilits Islamic duty by adopting a firm attitude towards those who belittle the beliefs of religion of Muslims;

Reaffirming and Recalling the special declaration and Resolution adopted by the 18th and 19th Islamic Conferences of Foreign Ministers held in Riyadh and Cairo respectively on the unified Islamic stand against any insult or blasphemy, and the need to take the necessary measures to combat such acts, as referred to in the above-mentioned declaration; and resolution;

- 1. Strongly denounces any individual or official stand in support of any insult directed against the sanctities of revealed religions; and takes exception to disregarding such insults as are directed against moral and human principles, cultural values and the religious beliefs of the majority of people, under the pretext of allowing the freedom of belief, expression and writing and respect for the principles of non-interference in the internal affairs of other states.
- 2. Reaffirms that it is the unanimous opinion of all the Ulema that any insult, show of disrespect or slighting of the great Prophets, the Holy Quran, the authentic Books of Sunnah of the most revered Prophet, his noble family and his devoted companions, constitutes a most sacrilegious act, and those who commit such acts are definitely apostates.

### Appendix III

pays tribute to all Muslim and non-Muslim as well as the pays tribute to all Muslim and non-Muslim as well as the pays tribute to all Muslim and non-Muslim as well as the pays tribute to all Muslim and governments who, motivately being sample to the pays the pays tribute to all Muslim and non-Muslim as well as well as the pays tribute to all Muslim and non-Muslim as well as the pays tribute to all Muslim and non-Muslim as well as the pays tribute to all Muslim and non-Muslim as well as the pays tribute to all Muslim and non-Muslim as well as the pays tribute to all Muslim and non-Muslim as well as the pays tribute to all Muslim and non-Muslim as well as the pays tribute to all Muslim and non-Muslim as well as the pays tribute to all Muslim and non-Muslim as well as the pays tribute to all Muslim and non-Muslim as well as the pays tribute to all Muslim and non-Muslim as well as the pays tribute to all Muslim and non-Muslim as well as the pays tribute to all Muslim and non-Muslim as well as the pays tribute to all Muslim and non-Muslim as well as the pays tribute to all Muslim and non-Muslim as well as the pays tribute to all Muslim and non-Muslim as well as the pays tribute to all Muslim and non-Muslim as well as the pays tribute to all Muslim and non-Muslim as well as the pays tribute to all Muslim and non-Muslim and non-Muslim as well as the pays tribute to all Muslim and non-Muslim as well as the pays tribute to all Muslim and non-Muslim as well as the pays tribute to all Muslim and non-Muslim as well as the pays tribute to all Muslim and non-Muslim as well as the pays tribute to all Muslim and non-Muslim as well as the pays tribute to all Muslim and non-Muslim as well as the pays tribute to all Muslim and non-Muslim as the pays tribute to all Muslim and non-Muslim as the pays tribute to all Muslim and non-Muslim as the pays tribute to all Muslim and non-Muslim as the pays tribute to all Muslim and non-Muslim as the pays tribute to all Muslim and non-Muslim as the pays tribute to all Muslim and non-Muslim as

Calls on Member States of the United Nations and all administrational organizations to contribute to the preservation of the preservation of the united Nations and all administrational organizations to contribute to the preservation of the united Nations and all administrations of the United Nations and the United Natio

Jurges Member States to request their representatives the world, to follow up this important issue and to appear and coordinate their activities with the OIC Secretary and in this respect.

6. Requests the Secretary General to study the possibility of the work programme of Islamic Figh Academy the studid awing up of an international instrument on respecting the values and Sanctities, and submit a report on this

1. Pays tribute, once again, for the efforts of the Ministers ithme and Information of Member States and all institutions of aux for their efforts aimed at preparing the Strategy for Culture disconnation to preserve the Islamic Ummah from all campaigns likingation.

8. Urges the member states to take the necessary measures, in windance with their existing national laws and regulations, in stated publishing houses and their holding companies to ban the mixing and sale of any information material or publications with the later.

9. Decides to consider the issue at the Twenty-first of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers.

APPENDIXIV

# U.K. Action Committee On Islamic Affairs - A Profile

The UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs (UKACIA) was formed in October 1988 immediately after the publication of the sacrilegious, deeply malicious and offensive book The Salamic Verses by Viking Penguin. The UKACIA, which represents all major organizations, mosques and eminent individuals throughout the United Kingdom, has mounted a sustained, principled and peaceful campaign from the beginning. It has been requesting Viking Penguin, as the publisher, to withdraw and pulp the remaining copies of the book; to undertake not to publish in any form or manner any further edition or translation of the book; to tender an unqualified apology to the followers of Islam; and to pay damages to an agreed charity.

The Action Committee has also been campaigning for suitable legislation to criminalize incitement to religious hatred and abuse and deal with sacrilege and insult to religious sanctities, in the hope of attaining safeguards and a consensus against the appearance of similar sacrilege in the future. The Action Committee has submitted to the Home Secretary a report in June 1993 'Muslims and the Lawin Multi-Faith Britain: The Need for Reform'.

The Committee has had a number of meetings with Government officials, Members of Parliament, Church officials, Community Relations councils, and Ambassadors of Muslim countries to formulate and get support for measures to deal with the serious issues raised by the continued promotion of *The Satanic Verses* and similar publications. The Committee has met various Ministers and senior officials at the Home Office to discuss legal provisions for protecting religious sensitivities.

In order to get the British Parliament to enact a suitable law to

offence to publish any book/material abusing religion or rilgious hatred, the UKACIA has launched a massive campaign. With the help of a cross-section of Members of a National Petition, with about a quarter of a million will be presented to Parliament. The British Muslims' ausued by the Muslim Action Front, London, to have Rushdie Amount, the author and publisher respectively of The Satanic prosecuted for blasphemy was rejected by the British High am 9th April, 1990. The Court ruled that the law protected only Anstan religion and is not applicable to Islam. Although the Muslims have been unsuccessful in getting any redress from Annsh Attomey General, Director of Public Prosecutions, with Court, High Court, House of Commons and House of at they intend to take the case to the European Parliament and to we fundean Court of Human Rights in due course of time. On the mile of UKACIA, the British Muslims conducted a week-long I from 8th-12th January, 1990, in front of Viking-Penguin ins, London. Despite cold and inclement weather, representatives thish Muslims from all major cities such as Birmingham, hdm, Cardiff, Glasgow and Leicester participated. A letter amout Muslim requests was given to Mr. Peter Mayer, managing fathr of Penguin. A reply from Mr. Mayer shows that the Mishers remain intransigent.

luder the aegis of the UKACIA, a delegation of British Muslims meenling major organizations in the UK, met the Ambassadors of beladesh, Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Malaysia, Pakistan, Saudi Senegal, Sudan and Yemen in London. The delegation arrived dissatisfaction over the inaction of some of the Muslim whis in implementing the OIC declaration and defending the owof Islam and urged the Ambassadors to do whatever they can move the situation. The delegation also requested the Muslim whesto take appropriate and decisive action against the Penguin m and give the required publicity to measures taken in this The UKACIA declared Friday, 16th February, 1990, as a In Prayer and Dedication to the martyrs of Islamabad, Bombay Whatmir who died in 1989 defending the honour of the blessed Met (peace be upon him) and his Companions and expressing revulsion against the sacrilegious book, The Satanic Verses. Muslim organizations and groups have been regularly meetings and seminars in different parts of Britain,

focusing on the issues raised by the continued promotion of sacrilege and religious abuse, the effect on community relations and media a Muslim children and youth, education, media coverage and sales

The UKACIA has sought through press releases and television and radio news interviews to deal with aspects of the campaign as the arise. In recent press releases of March and April 1993, the UKADIA has strongly resented the official meetings of Salman Rushdie the British Foreign Secretary and the Prime Minister. A booklet, The British Muslim Response to Mr. Patten, was published in July 1980 containing the full text of the letter from Mr. John Patten, Home Office Minister, to British Muslims and the full text of the reply on behalf of the UKACIA. (Appendix II of this book contains a full account of this correspondence.) The booklet was sent to all Members of Parliament, members of the House of Lords, Communication ty Relations Councils, Universities, and other institutions and individuals in Britain. It was also translated into Urdu. The UKACIA Bulletin has been issued at regular intervals to keep the Muslim community informed of the campaign. The Delegation of the UKACIA participated in almost all the Islamic Conferences of Foreign Ministers held at Riyadh, Cairo, Tehran and Karachi after the publication of the sacrilegious book, The Satanic Verses in October 1988. They played a major role in the adoption of the OIC Declaration and Resolutions for combating blasphemy. They were also invited to the Sixth Islamic Summit in Dakar, Senegal in December 1991.

The UKACIA has been greatly concerned about the tragedy befalling Muslims in Bosnia. To draw attention to the brutal genocide, rape, torture, ethnic cleansing and usurpation of territory in Bosnia the UKACIA met Ambassadors, MPs. Church leaders and public figures, exhorting them to act urgently and decisively. That the Serb aggression must be immediately stopped was the message articulated by the UKACIA in its meetings and press releases. The member organizations of the UKACIA have been actively engaged in efforts to solve the problems British Muslims face as a religious minority, for example, single-sex education, halal food, equal opportunities and racial harassment.

The UKACIA's main body is its Steering Committee, which consists of the following:

#### Appendix IV

| ,  | Organization             | City   |
|--|--------------------------|--|
| Al-Mughram   | Islamic Cultural Centre  | London   |
| thamdi   | (Chairman)               |  |
| Sacranie   | Balham Mosque            | London   |
| Atm -  | (Joint Convenor)         |  |
| u Manazir Ahsan  | Islamic Foundation       | Leicester  |
| Ali Ashraf   | Islamic Academy          | Cambridge  |
| Sher Azam  | Bradford Council of      | Bradford   |
|  | Mosques                  | Diagram .  |
| MH. Faruqi   | Impact International     | London   |
| Abdul Wahid Hamid  | Muslim Education and     | London   |
| San San San  | Literary Services        | STREET, LINEWEY,   |
| Nahmood El-Khani   | Muslim Welfare House     | London   |
| Bashir Mann  | Islamic Defence Council, | Glasgow  |
| The state of the s | Scotland                 | THE RESERVE OF THE PARTY OF THE |
| Julia Yukub Miftahi  | Hizbul Ulema UK          | Blackburn  |
| Ŀ Ebrahimsa  | Islamic Council of       | London   |
| Muhammad   | Europe                   |  |
| ) § Aziz Pasha   | Union of Muslim          | London   |
|  | Organizations            |  |
| ) lafar Qureshi  | Muslim Doctors'          | Wolverhampton  |
|  | Association              |  |
| Many Yusuf Rajbee  | Council of Mosques UK    | Hastings   |
| h Tanzim Wasti   | UK Islamic Mission &     | London   |
|  | Muslim Solidarity        |  |
|  | Committee                |  |

National Committee (Names of Representatives within Parenthesis)

Mujahideen (Dr. M.A. Amanyar) Man. M. Israrul Haque)

Mosque (Mr. Igbal Sacranie)

Metham Central Mosque (Dr. M. Naseem) Muslim Action Committee (Qari Suleyman)

Council of Mosques (Mr. Sher Azam and Mr. Liaqat

Muslim Action Committee (Mr. Mukhtar A. Younis)

British Muslim Action Front (Mr. Abdal Chaudhary and Banks)

British Shia Muslim Action Committee (Mr. Shabbir Rivi) Central Association of Sunni Mosques UK (Maulana Nissa Ale

Confederation of Sunni Mosques, Midlands (Maulana Barana)

Council of Mosques in Lancashire (Mr. Bailogi) Council of Mosques of South London and Surrey (Management Hassan)

Council of Mosques UK (Dr. Tariq Yusuf Rajbee) Dawatul Islam UK (Maulana Abu Saeed and Mr. Abdul Hand Choudhary)

East London Mosque (Maulana Abdul Awwal) Federation of Muslim Organizations in Leicestershire (Mr. Mahamata) Kantharia, Mr. Yaqub Khan, Mr. Ahmad Khan and Mr. Mauor Mughal)

Federation of Societies of Islamic Students (President) Glasgow Central Mosque (Mr. Tufail Shaheen) Hizbul Ulema UK (Maulana Yukub Miftahi)

Idara-e-Jaaferiya (Mr. Ghulam Raza) Impact International (Mr. M.H. Faruqi)

Institute of Islamic Studies and Dawa (Dr. Khalid Alavi)

Islamia School Trust (Mr. Moeen Yasin) Islamic Academy (Professor S. Ali Ashraf)

Islamic Community Centre, Haringey (Mr. Chowdhury Muern Uddin)

Islamic Council for Palestine (Mr. Abdel Salam Abushkaidem) Islamic Council of Europe (Mr. Ebrahimsa Muhammad) Islamic Cultural Centre (Dr. A. Al-Mughram Al-Ghamdi) Islamic Defence Council, London (Maulana Atiqur Rahman Samb

hali) Islamic Defence Council, Scotland (Mr. Bashir Mann)

Islamic Doctors' Association (Dr. Majid Katme) Islamic Forum of Europe (Dr. M. Abdul Bari and Mr. Muslehuddin Farazi)

Islamic Foundation (Dr. M. Manazir Ahsan) Islamic Shariah Council (Mufti Aslam and Dr. S.M. Darsh) Islamic Society of Brighton (Mr. Abdul Jalil Sajid)

Jamiat-e-Ulema UK (Maulana Abdul Rasheed Rabbani)

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Juma Markazi (Maulana Musa Qasimi) Movement (Mr. Fazlun Khalid and Mr. Idrees Mears) Association UK (Mr. A.A. Yusuf) Aid (Mr. M. Yusuf Islam) Doctors' Association (Dr. Jafar Qureshi) Education and Literary Services (Mr. Abdul Wahid

Education Co-ordinating Council (Mr. Nazar Mustafa)

Education Trust (Mr. Ghulam Sarwar)

Solidarity Committee (Mr. S.M. Tanzim Wasti)

Welfare House (Dr. Mahmood El-Khani) World League (Dr. S. Selim Has)

(Maulana Tufail Hussain Shah) of Muslim Organizations (Dr. S. Aziz Pasha)

Muslim Action Committee (Mr. Muhammad Yasin)

Muslims Organization (Mr. Musaddiq Ahmad) Muslims (UK) (Mr. Mahmud al-Rashid)

#### Press Releases

anday 18th February 1989, 4.00 p.m.

RUK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs has noted Mr. while's expression of "regret" and recognition by him that "the win many parts of the world are genuinely distressed by the "of the 'Satanic Verses'.

Committee however, wishes to reiterate its request made four ago to the publishers, Viking-Penguin; viz:

withdraw and pulp the remaining copies of the book;

10 undertake not to publish in any form or manner any further dition or translation of the novel;

and unqualified apology to all the followers of Islam;

And damages to an agreed Muslim charity.

We very much hope that the publishers would resolve the manicably and urgently.

## Monday 27th February 1989

The following statement was issued by the UKACIA delegation that visited Mr. Patten, Minister of State, Home Office.

The delegation had a very courteous and positive meeting with Mr. Patten, Minister of State. We had a frank and heart to heart talk of the deep offence caused to the Muslim community by the continued publication of The Satanic Verses.

The minister showed his sincere understanding for the feelings of the community but outlined the problem in amending the Law of Blasphemy. The delegation pointed out that it was not seeking any particular form of legislation instead it was concerned that there should be some legal redress against abuse and sacrilege of its religious sanctities.

The delegation made it clear that the British Muslims are pursuing their moral campaign within the strict bounds of the law and there is no question of any violence or intimidation.

The Minister invited us to continue with dialogue and of course we will.

#### Monday 6th March 1989

The UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs welcomes the statements made by the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary the Archbishop of Canterbury and the chief Rabbi, in addition to statements from other representative sections of national opinion

## Appendix IV

that the book "The Satanic Verses" is deeply offensive and feelings of Muslims and other sections of British

printee commends the Muslims throughout Britain who peaceful, lawful and dignified manner expressed their to the sacrilege committed and urges them to continue to this book is withdrawn and the demands of the committee white. Viking Penguin, are met, namely:

and pulp the remaining copies of the book;
and trake not to publish in any form or manner any further
and or translation of the novel;
and an unqualified apology to all Muslims; and
and damages to an agreed Muslim charity.

Immittee calls on the Muslims and all believers to observe Surtan/Thursday 22nd March 1989 as a day of prayer and with hope that this calculated blasphemy will be effectively without further hurt, tension and loss of life.

#### 20th March 1989

LL Action Committee on Islamic Affairs has welcomed the action of the 18th Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers held that a positive contribution towards an International towards an international towards and in particular the firm by Organisation of Islamic Conference (O.I.C.) member that against the sacrilege caused by the publication of the lack Salanic Verses'.

Committee also noted as significant the recognition by Waldegrave, Minister of State in the Foreign Office, that The Waldegrave, as "blasphemous book."

Committee strongly feels that the O.I.C.'s Declaration as the statement by Her Majesty's Government Minister is a howards the solution of the long and agonising crisis

caused by the offensive publication. The Committee the publishers to the publishers to with reiterates its earlier request to the publishers to withdraw and close this ugly saga which has outraged has outrageous book and close this ugly saga which has outraged not be used community but also the great major. the entire Muslim world community but also the great majority of be minded people everywhere.

Following earlier recognition by the Prime Minister and Form Secretary that the book is highly offensive and Mr. Waldegrave. unequivocal statement that the book is blasphemous, the Achie Committee reiterates its request to Her Majesty's Government to fine legal redress against such an offence.

The Action Committee also commends the Muslim Community the U.K. for pursuing their campaign in a peaceful and a dignified manner. It has also announced that the 15th Sha'ban 1409 (being 22/23 March 1989) which is observed as a day of prayer and fasting will be devoted to seeking the help and guidance of Allah for the successful ending of this painful episode.

25th May 1989

ISLAMIC DEMONSTRATION TO PARLIAMENT Saturday 27th May 1989 London, Hyde Park/Marble Arch, 1.00 p.m.

Several thousand Muslims from all over Britain will converge on Hyde Park, London for a march to Downing Street and Parliament Their aim will be to urge the Prime Minister and the British government and parliament to exert moral pressure on the Viking Penguin publishing group to withdraw the obscene, offensive and malicious book, "The Satanic Verses", which has been a source of deep pain and anguish to the Muslim community and generated a great deal of tension throughout the world. They will also be urging the government and parliament to find suitable legal sanctions, such as amending the Public Order Act, to deal with such publications and to protect the interests and dignity of religious communities.

#### Appendix IV

monstration has been organised by the British Muslim Action Me UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs, representing and mosques throughout the country, has given its full in the demonstration.

and a sent to all mosques and organisations in Britain the UK Committee has urged Muslims to make this "a massive antition for the dignity of Islam, the dignity of the blessed and his noble Companions, and the dignity and unity of

Action Committee regards this as a demonstration for and values, for truth and decency, for dignity and mutual respect at strength and stability of society. The Committee has also addemonstrating Muslims "to maintain discipline, law and order and allow themselves to be provoked into saying or doing that would harm the dignity, unity and solidarity of

formittee is determined to carry on its campaign to have this and offensive book withdrawn by Viking Penguin and seek in the hope of attaining safeguards and a consensus at a inter-religious and literary level against the appearance of th outrageous and malicious material.

15th February 1990

Action Committee on Islamic Affairs has declared Friday, muary, 1990 as a Day of Prayer and Dedication to the martyrs Bombay and Kashmir who sacrificed their lives a year beliading the honour of the Blessed Prophet (peace be upon companions and expressing their revulsion against the book "The Satanic Verses".

Action Committee on Islamic Affairs has appealed to the Muslims to observe this solemn occasion for making prayer to that Friday congregation in all towns for the bestowal of the

15th August 1990 ers Conference which met in Cairo ist 1990 has called on the United rganisations and world bodies "to to safeguard against sacrilege of retext" and to uphold the noble of humanity in line with the UN rther on its last year's "Declaration nemy Against Islam" by adopting a Il member states to follow up action n of the blasphemous book "The enting the requirement of the 1989 an the book. g houses to immediately withdraw cott any publishing house that does

gislation so as to make it an offence

equested to unify their efforts in this

adsister companies. He pointed out that the Muslim community appointed that not all the member states have been equally pror infilling their moral and Islamic obligations. in six-member delegation from the U.K. Action Committee amic Affairs who attended the conference were as follows: (I) Mr. Igbal Sacranie Joint Convenor UKACIA Member of National Committ (2) Dr. Manazir Ahsan Member of National Committ (3) Mr. Sher Azam Member of National Commit (4) Mr. Yusuf Islam (5) Dr. Jafar Oureshi Member of National Commit (6) Mr. Tanzim Wasti Member of National Commit POSITION STATEMENT ON THE CONTINUED PUB TION OF THE SACRILEGIOUS "SATANIC VERSES

annity remains determined to pursue its campaign relentless ath all legal and constitutional means. It was necessary that t I states implemented the requirements of the resolution with huther delay. These included, he reminded, sanctions firs and the publishing company and if necessary against the pare

and sympathy of a significant section of the larger Britis the problem remains unresolved because of the

any leg within the existing body of law. He said that the Musli

ered the Islamic Secretary General he implementation of the resolution issued at the Press Conference held on Saturday, 29th Dee to defame or blaspheme Islam and 1990 at the Islamic Cultural Centre, London, after R

reported conversion to Islam

## Appendix IV

Sacrilege versus Civility

history to abuse, insult and revile the blessed Messenger of God (peace be upon him), his household and companions (may God be pleased with them all) and to ridicule and revile Islamic sanctities.

All Islamic schools of thought are unanimously of the view that attempting to insult the Blessed Prophet (peace be upon him) is the most serious crime in the eyes of Islamic Law. The crime is considered as transgressing the limits (hudud), is worse than treason and is a capital offence. However, the sentence is only applicable where Islamic jurisdiction applies.

The British Muslim Community was inflamed by the publication of this sacrilegious book. However, it is to the credit of the Muslim Community that the campaign has been kept within peaceful bounds fully respecting British Law. The author's enforced hiding over the past months has been entirely the result of continuing insult and provocation on his part: At an early stage he said if he had known that his book was going to produce such a reaction by Muslims, he would have penned a stronger and more 'critical' book on Islam. In other words he would have gone even further in his insult and mockery of Islamic sanctities.

The U.K. Action Committee on Islamic Affairs felt that there was no way in which the Muslim World could condone or ignore the conduct of the author or the multinational Viking Penguin publishing group which chose to ignore the pre-publication advice of their own experts that the book was 'lethal' and went ahead to issue the 'Satanic Verses'. The Action Committee, therefore, asked Penguin to:

- 1) Withdraw and pulp the offensive book.
- 2) Undertake not to publish in any form or manner any further editions or translations of the book.
- 3) Tender an unqualified apology to the followers of Islam.
- 4) Pay damages to an agreed charity.

None of these demands were addressed to the author of the profanity, irrespective of any quibbling whether he was a Muslim, an apostate or a non-Muslim. In any case he was outside the

The author has received the backing of an "assorted the backing the backing of the backing to the backing the backing

Rear now being told that Salman Rushdie has become a Muslim. Doe would normally rejoice to hear someone entering the fold alsam and in the case of Mr. Rushdie the beginning of the end albe continuing offence caused by the publication of his book. Sady, however, he has been as equivocal about his latest moversion' as he has been previously in the matter of his pologies', just playing with words without any content or examing.

He says he has 'embraced' Islam as against accepting it. He signs a funny statement in the presence of a visiting official from a Muslim country and a few of his subordinates. The statement suggests no genuine repentance and commitment. He later writes in The Times that he is 'able now to say that I am Muslim'. Yet he was less than forthcoming when John Humphries asked him on BBC 1 television (News at Nine, December 24th, 1990): 'Now you have actually become a Muslim, have you?' Instead of saying 'Thank God, Yes,' he gave a long-winded answer that he has 'moved closer and closer to an engagement with religious faith' and he has 'no quarrel with the central tenets of Islam'.

But Islam is neither an external entity for someone to 'embrace' it, nor is it 'engagement with religious faith'. There are no 'witnesses', 'insiders' or 'outsiders' in Islam or Muslims with 'observer' status. As the word itself means, Islam is submission, to God and His Prophet (peace be upon him). Mr. Rushdie simply

## Appendix IV

#### Sacrilege versus Civility

claims the 'ability' to say that 'I am Muslim', but he is not able to say clearly and unequivocally that he is now Muslim and willing to submit to Islam.

Frances de Souza, chairwoman of the Rushdie Defence Committee therefore, rightly thinks that 'Salman Rushdie feels very strongly that he has not necessarily changed his position'. She points out to *The Times* (December 27th 1990): 'He has talked about embracing the religion. Conversion is not the word he has used.'

While the question of Rushdie's religion can be left as something between him and God, there is little evidence of regret or repentance over his past. Instead of making amends, he is being mischievous.

He does not admit that the Satanic Verses is 'offensive' and he does not intend to repudiate, much less withdraw it. He even lies that the 'six Muslim scholars agreed with me that the book was not offensive and was not written to be offensive'. Sheikh Gamal Manna' has said that nothing like this has happened. Rushdie still maintains that the book is 'a serious work of art' and wants Muslims to appreciate it as a 'portrait' of conflict between the material and the spiritual worlds. He belittles Muslim objections to sacrilege as a 'furore'.

Rushdie is less than honest when he says 'that I do not agree with any statement in my novel the Satanic Verses uttered by any of the characters who insult the Prophet Muhammad or who cast aspersions upon Islam or upon the authenticity of the Holy Quran, or who reject the divinity of Allah.' It was as if he himself had not put those insulting words into their mouths and the characters were living objects who had spoken for themselves. In any case when John Humphries asked him 'Are you sorry for what you have written?' he replied: 'I am very sorry for the way it (the book) has been taken', adding that the question of the withdrawal of the book does not arise. The fault therefore did not lie with the writer, but with those who feel 'upset'!

Rushdie has, however, undertaken 'not to publish the paperback

of the Satanic Verses or to permit any further agreements into other languages, while any risk of further crists.'

paperback edition stands long abandoned by Penguin and white claims to be an 'enormous gesture' translates into the languages', that is translations that have that have a presented on the existence of 'any risk of further offence'. It moment it was felt that this can be done with impunity and thoust any risk, the author shall feel free to make 'further prements for translation'. There is no undertaking about filming the sand electronic publishing. Meanwhile the English language under the present of the sand electronic publishing would continue to circulate.

ReU.K. Action Committee on Islamic Affairs, therefore, feels but the whole thing is a disingenuous ploy to bail out the concerns of the Satanic Verses without meeting any of the concerns of the Muslim Community and indeed dismissing it and mocking it as causing a 'furore' over nothing. The only difference is that what was sought to be achieved previously brough the pen of an 'unbeliever' Rushdie is sought to be pursued with the help of a 'Muslim' Rushdie.

The Action Committee, therefore, reiterates its position that it would continue to campaign against the publishers. It will seek full implementation of the resolutions of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference until the British Muslim Community's demands – namely, withdrawal, apology and damages – are met. It also appeals to Muslims in Britain and abroad not to be misled or confused by the new PR campaign designed to rehabilitate Rushdie and his profane and filthy book, the Satanic Verses.

The real issue is the continued publication of the book. By refusing to see the problem in its true perspective the writer and his 'friends' are only helping to complicate things for Rushdie.

Given these circumstances the U.K. Action Committee on Islamic Affairs has no alternative but to continue with the campaign until such time as its demands are met.

7th January 1991

Dear Brother in Islam.

As-salamu Alaykum.

The recent "reported" acceptance of Islam by Salman Rushdie and his later and often contradictory statements may have caused you some misunderstanding.

In a largely attended meeting of the UK Action Committee held in London, represented by leading Muslim leaders, Ulema, Imams of the mosques and office bearers of Muslim organisations, the issue was discussed at length and the Action Committee arrived at the conclusion that Rushdie's reported embracing of Islam is yet another ploy to save his life. For he has not withdrawn the hardback edition of The Satanic Verses, the real cause of offence to Muslims. Rushdie has recanted also his stand on the withdrawal of the paperback edition, saying that it has been only postponed as long as the risk remains. As a true Muslim, repentant over his misdeeds, Rushdie should have totally withdrawn The Satanic Verses and felt remorseful for having written such a blasphemous book. Given these considerations, the UK Action Committee is of the view that the solution to the problem lies only in meeting the following oft-repeated demands of British Muslims that:

- (i) The Satanic Verses be totally withdrawn and its copies pulped.
- (ii) The publisher and author of The Satanic Verses tender an unqualified apology to the Muslims of the world for having hurt their religious feelings.
- Damages be paid to an agreed Muslim charity.

We believe the above policy statement of the UK Action Committee would help you appreciate the latest developments in the Rushdie affair. We look forward to your continued co-operation in our campaign against this blasphemous book. May Allah accept our effort and reward you for your active role. (Ameen).

Please explain the Muslim viewpoint to the wider community in

## Appendix IV

and circulate the document as widely as place inform us if you need more copies.

Convenor Laction Committee

24th January 1991

## SEEKING THE WAY FORWARD IN THE 'SATANIC VERSES' AFFAIR

Is Angela Rumbold, Home Office Minister has expressed her adestanding of the continuing concerns of the British Muslim ammunity with respect to 'The Satanic Verses', especially with repect to the legal provisions concerning such situations. She was thing to a six-member delegation of the U.K. Action Committee on blamic Affairs which has been campaigning for the withdrawal of the sacrilegious book and adoption of the appropriate legal and/or administrative measures in order to avoid any similar occurrence of social offence in the future. The Minister said 'it was an unworthy thing to have happened,' but felt that it was very 'unlikely for such books to be published in the future.' There were difficulties, however, in enacting any legislation to control publications in this country, she explained.

She, however, assured the Muslim delegation that the Government wished 'to find a way forward that would command general agreement' and it was agreed that the range of problems identified during the discussions should be reviewed in order to find a solution. Home Office officials would soon meet with the representatives of the Action Committee in this regard.

## Appendix IV

Sacrilege versus Civility

The meeting had been arranged before the outbreak of the war in the Gulf, but the delegation took the opportunity to draw attention of the Minister to the recent flurry of seemingly Gulf-related acts of violence or arson against Mosques, Islamic institutions and even individuals, including the case of an unidentified Muslim woman who was reportedly killed in an underground accident. The delegation urged an inquiry into the cause of this death and adoption of stricter preventive and protective measures against Muslim-targeted incidents.

Members of the Action Committee welcomed last week's statement by the Home Secretary in this respect, but felt the provocative and incining approach of some sections of the media was proving unhelpful. Mrs. Angela Rumbold condemned all such acts of violence and assured that the Government will not accept any breach of law.

The discussion also necessarily touched on the Gulf War and members of the delegation said that generally the Muslim community does not accept the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait, however it also disapproved the devastating military solution of the kind which was being attempted now and which might in the end prove counterproductive to the avowed objectives of the coalition. The best course would be to pursue all political and peaceful means and seek a comprehensive solution to the problem. The Minister explained at some length the position of the British Government and the steps it had taken to find a political solution of the problem.

10th June 1991

"THE SATANIC VERSES" ON ISLAMIC STATES'
AGENDA

Islamic states meeting in Tehran are to review the implementation of their Riyadh and Cairo resolutions on Joint Action Against Sacrilege

Munic Sanctities. Following the worldwide outrage against the default of the Penguin-Viking book "The Satanic Verses", the Ministers of the 46 nation Organisation of the Islamic offence (OIC) had resolved to adopt a unified stand against the and any future repeat of the sacrilege against Islamic organisms. Besides banning the profane title within their own decions, the OIC states also decided to act against the publishing only, should it fail to withdraw the book and offer an unequivocal organisms. The Penguin group as well as the holding company, Pearson that extensive business interests in the OIC countries.

interest Muslim demand, the Islamic Commission for Economic, Othural and Social Affairs, which opened in Tehran on Sunday 8 line, is to review the lack of progress in the implementation of its resolutions and to transmit more specific proposals to the forthcoming Islamic Foreign Ministers' Conference scheduled to meet in Islambul next August.

The Islamic Commission is a specialised organ of the OIC dealing with economic, cultural and social affairs and its meeting, opened by the Iranian Foreign Minister, Dr. Ali Akbar Velayeti, is the first OIC meeting hosted by Iran since the revolution.

Atwo-member delegation of the UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs, Mr. Iqbal Sacranie and Dr. Manazir Ahsan, is representing British Muslims at the meeting. The Action Committee is an umbrella body which has been campaigning for the withdrawal of the book since its publication in 1988. It is also petitioning Parliament to remove the legal lacuna whereby it is lawful to commit sacrilege against religious sanctities, save those of the Anglican faith.

The Commission concludes its deliberations on 12 June.

1st August 1991

REPORT FOR CONSIDERATION AT THE
20TH ISLAMIC COUNTRIES' FOREIGN MINISTERS' (ICFM)
CONFERENCE IN ISTANBUL ON JOINT ISLAMIC ACTION
TO COMBAT BLASPHEMY CAMPAIGNS AGAINST ISLAM

The OIC General Secretariat has devoted a great deal of attention, immediately it learnt about the publication of the blasphemous book "The Satanic Verses" by Penguin, a reputable publisher in the United Kingdom in September 1988.

At the 18th ICFM Conference held in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Conference issued a Declaration on Joint Islamic Action to Combat Blasphemy Against Islam in which it expressed the resolve of all Islamic States to continue their efforts based on the noble Shariah at the national, regional and international levels to effectively combat blasphemy against Islam and abuse of Islamic personalities and preservation of Islamic sanctities. (Muqaddisat).

The blasphemous book, The Satanic Verses had been proscribed in nearly every Member State and in many non-Muslim States. However, the book remained in circulation and the new editions were being published and translated in other languages.

This subject matter was brought to the attention of the 19th ICFM Conference held in Cairo. The Conference adopted a comprehensive resolution 21/19-C on the subject. Its operative paragraph urged the Member States to take the necessary measures in respect of publishing houses and their holding companies and to ban the publishing and sale of any material or publications prejudicial to Islam.

There is no doubt that these powerful and authoritative declarations and resolutions have gone a long way in helping to clarify the seriousness of the offence. The fatwas issued by the late Imam Khomeini as well as by Majma Fiqh Al-Islami in Makkah Al Mukarramah declaring clearly and categorically that such sacrilege

crime in the eyes of Islamic Shariah, further endorsed of consensus on this important issue throughout the limit of consensus on this important issue throughout the limit of Islamic Law, it is only through the implementation of the Declarations and Resolutions at an hope to obtain legitimate respect for Islamic sanctities and miolable personality and teachings of the blessed Prophet and (PBUH).

To view the subject matter in its correct perspective it is simultabilities and why the Muslim Community in the stad chosen to challenge the publication of 'The Satanic so, in a most civilized manner and in keeping with the maratic norms and values of their country of residence.

Their decision to challenge the book, which in fact was not a met but a bag of filth, was deliberate and well considered. A megious book published in any European language 40 or 50 years are would have been a book published in a foreign language and in a mign and distant country with little impact or implication for the ladim world. This position has now changed. English or for that after French, German, Spanish or Portuguese are no more foreign aguages to Muslims. There are large Muslim communities for show these languages are the principal languages of work and sudy.

The implications of its publication for the Muslim community in the West were direct, serious and long-term. Having gained literary acceptability and left unchallenged for its profanities and sacrilege, 'The Satanic Verses' would have become part of the educational syllabuses and a highly commended and virtually a compulsory reading for young and impressionable Muslim children in the West. Ill-equipped in terms of facility for Islamic education as these communities are — because of the unparalleled emigration — there is little doubt this would have done incalculable damage to the education and understanding of Islam. Needless to say that these satanic verses would have spawned other satanic titles and all of these would have gone to poison the education system. Once these communities were infected by such filth the contagion was bound to travel to the Muslim countries as well.

Equally important, it has to be recognized that publication of such sacrilege was not an internal Muslim affair. It was bound to distort and disturb the relationship between Muslim and non-Muslim communities, between the Muslim world and the Western world.

It was for the aforementioned reasons that the Muslim communities in the West felt impelled to raise their voice of protest and objection in a dignified manner. It was not easy for them to have dared to challenge the big guns of literature and liberalism in their ownden. For two and a half years the Muslim community has had to face most vile and intimidating attacks from the leading newspapers, radio and TV channels but Alhamdulillah the Muslims in Britain stood their ground with patience and civility and this has made many leading writers and columnists to re-think their positions.

It is a sad fact that despite Riyadh Declaration (1989) and Cairo Resolution (1990) no effective steps have been taken by the large majority of Muslim States to implement the operative clauses of the Resolution in letter and spirit. The Muslim Ummah had been looking towards the effective role of the OIC with great enthusiasm and naturally felt frustrated at the lack of appropriate action from this august body. As a result of which the book continues to remain in publication and circulation, not only in English but other languages as well causing continuous insult and grief to the Muslim community.

It now becomes absolutely imperative for the OIC and its Member States to implement the Resolution adopted at the 19th ICFM Conference in Cairo by taking the following measures:

- The OIC Secretariat should confirm whether all Member States without exception have in compliance with its Resolutions, banned the book in their respective countries.
- To ensure that all other titles of the publisher of the sacrilegious book are banned from import into Member States.
- 3. All Member States through their appropriate channels should impress upon the publisher and their holding

## Appendix IV

companies to withdraw the book from circulation, pulp remaining copies and undertake not to publish it again in any form or language.

- 4 Should the book continue in circulation Member States should take appropriate actions, such as sanctions against the parent and holding companies, who have business interests in these countries.
- 5. To set up an Implementation Committee in earnest to see that the specific requirements of Resolution No. 21/19-C are implemented speedily and at all levels. The U.K. Action Committee on Islamic Affairs which has been spearheading and coordinating the campaign against blasphemous publications be co-opted on the Committee.
- 6. Tocreate an Islamic Panel of Experts in order to study the problem of sacrilege within the parameters of International Law and Conventions with a view to establishing some kind of "International Convention on Respecting the Religious Sanctities (Muqaddisat) of all Recognised Faiths".
- 7. To pay greater attention to the welfare and development of the new and nascent Muslim community in the West, particularly in the areas of education and training. The future challenge lies in these two strategic but ill-resourced areas.
- 8. To adopt an active programme to initiate, implement and support projects aimed at writing Islamic titles as basic and supplementary reading for Muslim generations in the West as well as an input for the Western resource libraries on Islam and the Muslim World.
  - 9. To monitor and screen new publications on Islam and the Muslim World so as to ensure they are not in any way offensive to Islam and its sanctities. However, where such offence of sacrilege is committed, appropriate measures shall be taken against it.

The Muslims in the West are a front line community. Given

the right moral support, it can become a bridge for furthering better relations between the West and the Muslim world and indeed for the understanding of Islam itself. On the other hand, if neglected and alienated it will not only become a lost community, it can also become a tool for subversion of Islam and Islamic values. The author of 'The Satanic Verses' is the clearest example of this phenomenon.

It is O.I.C.'s firm conviction that the question of the honour and dignity of our Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is basic to our *Iman*. The Ummah can win no battle without winning the battle of dignity. That is why Islam does not accept the offence of insulting the Blessed Prophet (PBUH) and deals with it firmly and clearly without any equivocation.

O.I.C. as the only Organization that embodies all Islamic countries should therefore adopt the aforementioned measures which will not only deter the recurrence of such offence but protect the Muslim Community from abuse and thereby safeguard Islamic values.

Should the Islamic countries show the slightest weakness in defending the noble Islamic Values they will not be in a position to convey to the future generations that Islam is the best way of life for the entire mankind.

(This document was circulated by the OIC Secretariat for consideration by the member states at the 20th Islamic Countries' Foreign Ministers' Conference.)

John Major M.P.

Prime Minister

unt writing to draw your attention to the deep concern and ring sense of vulnerability being felt throughout the Muslim munity in Britain. These perceptions are inevitably taking hold that it is realised that the laws of the country do not seem to accord a same rights to Muslims as individuals and as a religious munity as enjoyed by all other communities.

he recent judgement of the Industrial Tribunal in Sheffield has applicated once again the unfortunate fact that it is not illegal to descriminate against Muslims while it is unlawful for example to descriminate against Jews or Sikhs. The non-granting of voluntary wided status to any Muslim schools with one excuse or another in matrast with other religious communities who have four thousand four hundred and fifty-one (4451) voluntary aided denominational schools, clearly represents unfair and unequal treatment and moreover makes the ideal of pluralism inconsistent in practice. And then of course there is the unmitigated insult and abuse caused by the continued publication and circulation of the sacrilegious and malicious book "The Satanic Verses".

Clearly there are anomalies, deficiencies and lacunae in the existing legal system which seem to put some religious communities at a disadvantage and which afford no protection to individuals against discrimination on religious grounds. Clearly also there is not the same evenhandedness in applying existing provisions to all communities. All this, we feel sure you would agree, does not conform with the existence of a multicultural, multi-religious society founded on equality and fairness.

The UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs (UKACIA) sincerely

believes that the quality of participation of the Muslims, as indeed of others, in British society will depend on the quality of rights and opportunities they are accorded as human beings, and as a religious community. While we are fully conscious of our responsibility towards society, we feel that these responsibilities will be better discharged if the community's need to preserve its ethos is recognised and if the facilities and where necessary the legal provisions for doing so are accorded, not grudgingly or as a result of a process of attrition, but willingly and in a spirit of goodwill and harmony. Accordingly, we write to you Prime Minister, in the expectation that necessary changes in the law to deal with sacrilege, incitement to religious hatred and discrimination on religious grounds will be put high on the parliamentary agenda.

We would also like to draw your attention to the growing acceptance within the larger community of the need for legal reforms as evidenced by various seminars and dialogues and in particular to The Commission for Racial Equality's latest Annual Report and their Consultative Paper on the Religion and the Law. The CRE believes that in the context of Britain's acceptance of the European Convention of Human Rights "International obligations would seem to demand a law on incitement to religious hatred in Britain and probably a law prohibiting discrimination on religious grounds". We therefore urge Her Majesty's Government to act urgently to remove the glaring anomalies in the situation with regard to the United Kingdom's domestic law on human rights. We believe that Britain is genuinely committed to the need for individuals and communities to live in mutual respect and dignity.

We therefore request you specifically to set in motion the appropriate steps towards enshrining Britain's commitment to International and European Declarations and Conventions on Human Rights and thereby correct the obvious deficiencies and lacunae in law.

We need hardly stress the urgency and need to use the dynamic processes of the law and education to reassure the British Muslim community that the multi-religious and multi-cultural composition of British society is founded on fairness and goodwill.

We look forward to your active support in accelerating these processes.

wishes and kind regards,

rerely

LK.M. Sacranie

11th December 1991

LIK. Action Committee on Islamic Affairs (UKACIA) relates the positive response of the Sixth Islamic Summit held in arfom 9th to 12th December 1991 on the issue of combating of rats on Islamic sanctities and values.

It Resolution has come about at a time when the sacrilegious and Itasive book "The Satanic Verses" continues to be published by Inguin/Viking and remains in circulation in total defiance of the Muslim world opinion.

tersince the publication of the offensive book, in October 1988, the WACIA, an umbrella body of major Muslim organizations in the United Kingdom has been actively campaigning for its total withdrawal from circulation. It has been working together closely with the Organization of the Islamic Conference to take appropriate measures to combat sacrilege and abuse of Islam occasioned by the publication of the offensive book.

The Resolution recalls and affirms the earlier Declaration and Resolutions adopted at the 18th, 19th and 20th Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers on the Joint Islamic Action to Combat Blasphemy Against Islam.

The Resolution strongly condemns all forms of cultural aggression, impelled by hatred for Islam and its sanctities.

It is particularly noteworthy that in view of the fact that the offensive

book remains in circulation and to prevent recurrence of such incident, the Conference requests the Secretary General of the Islamic Conference to take necessary measures for the drafting of an International Convention to ensure respect for sanctities and values.

The delegation of the UKACIA highly appreciates the assurances given by various Muslim Heads of State to continue to support the OIC Resolutions and the efforts made by the Action Committee to resolve the issue to the satisfaction of all persons who respect civilized values and to ensure that such sacrilege is not repeated.

16th December 1991

## INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION TO ENSURE RESPECT FOR SANCTITIES AND VALUES

On special invitation of the Organization of Islamic Conference, Jeddah and the Government of Senegal, a three-member delegation of the UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs attended the Sixth Islamic Summit in Dakar, the capital of Senegal from 9th to 12th December, 1991. The delegation comprised of Mr. Iqbal Sacranie, Joint Convenor of UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs, Dr. Manazir Ahsan, Director General of the Islamic Foundation, Leicester and Dr. El-Khani, Director, Muslim Welfare House, London.

The delegation met various Heads of State and Government and Leaders of delegations notably from Egypt, Iran, Malaysia, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Senegal. They briefed them about Muslim concern in the West over the continued publication and distribution of Rushdie's sacrilegious book "The Satanic Verses". Among other things, the delegation strongly pressed the O.I.C. Heads of State that they faithfully and completely implement the declaration and resolutions adopted at the Islamic Foreign Ministers' Conference in Riyadh (1989), Cairo (1990) and Istanbul (1991). They also

## Appendix IV

the need to adopt an International Convention against alongside other international conventions and instruments are spect for human dignity and religious rights. The Heads for human of the Action Committee about their resolve to implement and sacrilege are solved to combat blasphemy and sacrilege are solved to international and showed great interest in the idea of International

In the newly-built conference complex which was med by many journalists and T.V. personnel from Muslim and middle countries. In this press conference, the delegation middle background of the formation of the Action Committee the wake of the publication of 'The Satanic Verses' — as an implied body of major Muslim organizations and highlighted their implies to get the book totally withdrawn from circulation, showed by proper apology by the publisher and the author and might over. The Action Committee has also been calling upon the bitch Government to remove the legal lacunae which allowed wrilege, incitement to religious hatred and discrimination on religious grounds.

Medelegates of the Action Committee have in the past attended the Mamic Foreign Ministers' Conference in Riyadh and Cairo and played a significant role in the adoption of resolutions to combat sacrilege and vilification of Islam.

The Sixth Islamic Summit reaffirmed the earlier Declaration and Resolution adopted at the 18th, 19th and 20th Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers on the Joint Islamic Action to Combat Blasphermy Against Islam. Conference resolved to "counter individually and collectively, any campaign of vilification and denigration waged against Islam and its sacred values as well as the desecration of the Islamic places of worship." The Summit also pledged that the member states "shall individually and collectively endeavour to protect and promote the rights of Muslim communities and minorities in non-member states as well as strengthen the means of action of the Organization of the Islamic Conference in this regard".

is view of the fact that the offensive book. "The Satanic Verses" make in circulation and to prevent recurrence of such sacrilegious modern the Conference requested "the Secretary General of the Orsanization of the Islamic Conference to take the necessary measures for the drafting of an International Convention to ensure report for sanctines and values, and to submit a progress report areas to the following Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministen."

The delegation returned back from Senegal on Friday 18th December 1991.

31st January 1992

The UKACIA has strongly condemned the reported decision of the American Authors' Guild to bring out a paperback edition of the notations, fifthy and profane book, "The Satanic Verses". In a statement issued this morning, the UKACIA said it regarded the move as clearly provocative and calculated to add further insult to mury.

However, the Action Committee said, considering the uncivilised and insolent record of the so-called literati and fundamentalist literals. Muslims were not at all surprised. An insulter only diminishes himself and people behave according to the level of their civility, but the Muslim dialogue was addressed really to the Moral Majority all over the world than to the small minority of the so-called literals even though it happened to wield considerable power in the main-media industry.

The Action Committee called on Muslims not to allow themselves to be provided by the latest act of aggression against their sanctities and to pursue undeterred their steady and long-term campaign against channating sacrilege and incivility from human communications. It is not easy but the Action Committee is confident that its plea for calture and civility shall, God willing, eventually prevail and the civilized public opinion all over the world will uphold the principled

Muslims - as the BBC finally did by cancelling of another profanity 'The Last Temptation of

Like has, however, deplored the timid and hypocritical several OIC (Organisation of the Islamic Conference) where adopted a resolution against the sacrilege but have adopted a resolution against the sacrilege but have activity to implement their own solemn decisions. The same of the paperback edition of 'The Satanic Verses' was a set their face and it was mere short-sightedness, if anyone seed that by sitting quiet and passive over the issue, they will be a merafale themselves with the sacrilegious lobby and win mean and longevity for their regimes. Those who cannot stand a stend the dignity of the Blessed Prophet, peace be upon him, and themselves thrown into the dustbin of history. What cannot refinded by humans is defended by God Himself.

is know Committee therefore urges the OIC states to urgently executive resolution requiring them to adopt sanctions against to publishing group in the first instance and, if necessary, the aming company in the next stage. This is the least they are expected to

he Action Committee is determined to follow the course of its impaign of polite and persistent dialogue until the whole issue is moved in accordance with the basic norms of civility.

25th March 1992

The UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs strongly deprecates attempts by certain quarters to re-ignite the offence caused by the publication of "The Satanic Verses", by publishing the paperback edition of the notorious, filthy and profane book. This move is clearly provocative and calculated to add further insult to injury. It is also a cover for gross commercialisation of religious sacrilege.

The real victim in this transgression on the part of the author,

publishers and promoters of "The Satanic Verses" are the civilised values of truth and decency as well as the social stability of society.

The UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs therefore strongly believes that if gross abuse, ridicule and obscenities are allowed to proliferate, there is little hope for the stability of society and for people to be able to live in peace and dignity. This is why the Action Committee demands the total withdrawal of the book from circulation as well as legislation to criminalize abuse and vilification of religious sanctities.

The Action Committee is determined to follow the course of its campaign of polite and persistent dialogue until the whole issue is resolved in accordance with the basic norms of civility.

U.K. Action Committee on Islamic Affairs being the umbrella body of Muslim organisations in the United Kingdom and leading the campaign for the withdrawal of 'The Satanic Verses', has expressed serious concern over the one-sided treatment of the "Satanic Verses" affair in which the hurt and pain of the British Muslim community in particular has been totally ignored.

There seems to be a deliberate attempt on the part of the friends of the writer and certain publishing lobby to try to draw attention away from the continued offence by projecting Salman Rushdie as a victim instead of the author of his own misfortune.

The British Muslim community has always seen and said so in clear words, that the real problem is the continued publishing of the profane and sacrilegious book and not the "fatwa". While the British Government has given adequate protection to the writer it has failed to obtain redress of the Muslim hurt by not providing appropriate legal redress against the offence.

The Foreign Office Minister, Mr. Douglas Hogg's meeting was unterly ill advised, as we can see that instead of mitigating it has further inflamed the situation. The Committee therefore calls upon Her Majesty's Government to address itself to the real issue of sacrilege and not allow itself to be diverted by any side issues which will solve nothing.

## Appendix IV

Takes this opportunity to invite all concerned to cease abilipablications of all the editions and translations of "The abilipablications" and withdraw and pulp all the unused copies.

## 23rd February 1993

Action Committee on Islamic Affairs expresses its concern rise one-sided treatment by Her Majesty's Government of issues come to 'The Satanic Verses' in which the views of the Muslim mutity and of those who uphold decency in society have been all ignored.

LUKACIA has been campaigning for suitable legislation to mindise incitement to religious abuse and hatred and deal with subject and vilification of religious sanctities in order to attain a measus and safeguards against the continued publication and description of abuse and hate.

Weshare the pain and the agony which the nation is going through at mount as evidenced by the outcry against the rise in crime at all levels in society. We hope that in the soul-searching, attention will be foused not only on the symptoms of crime and moral decay but also on the root causes.

We firmly believe that the sacrilegious book 'The Satanic Verses' and similar material are destructive of moral values and of civilized society itself and that the government should address itself to discouraging and eliminating such material rather than seeming to give open and blatant support and succour to the perpetrators and purveyors of such offensive material.

There seems to be a deliberate attempt on the part of the friends of the writer in the media to divert attention from issues of substance pertaining to the harmony and well-being of our society. The notion of freedom of speech cannot be used as a cover for vilifying the sanctities of Islam and for abusing the entire Muslim communities world wide.

The Foreign Office and even the Prime Minister's office have also shown total and callous disregard for the concerns of the real victims of abuse and ridicule by allowing their august offices to be used for questionable objectives. It is evident that the government did not have the right expert advice because the "Satanic Verses" affair is not a political issue between one government and another. Whatever may be the outcome of the political exchanges between governments, the real problem is not going to go away. Clearly nothing can be achieved by adopting the course of provocation and aggravation.

The Committee invites the government and the media to take stock of the harm that is being done by their continued refusal to heed the voices of reason and good sense.

13th April 1993

The UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs (UKACIA) deplores the reported attempt to involve the Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. John Major, in the so-called Rushdie campaign as totally ill-advised as it is only likely to stir up feelings against the author of the sacrilegious book and severely damage the esteem and credibility of HM's Government in the eyes of Muslims and decent people everywhere.

The UKACIA's joint convenor and spokesman, Mr. Iqbal Sacranie, said it is still not too late to put the issue in the right perspective and recognise the deep hurt and offence caused by the continued publication of 'The Satanic Verses'.

The real issue in this unfortunate crisis is the destructive arrogance of the publishers and their friends to seek to impose a most obscene sacrilege on the Muslim community. This sense of outrage is wholly shared by all those, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, who believe in the value of civility and in the common basic norms of respecting the religious sanctities of others. The book has accordingly been proscribed in many non-Muslim countries.

surante further said "Flaunting the issue of the 'fatwa' only seeks to evade the real problem and serves proposent the normalization of Anglo-Iranian relations as the Health and many other MP's have suggested".

The British Muslim community which to say whom the Prime Minister should or should not will would be failing in its duty if it did not say that given the fine whole issue, the Prime Minister's meeting with the sacrilegious book would only be construed as showing towards the feelings of a deeply hurt British Muslim should be a conflict with the objective of sound harmony and good community relations."

Escranie said that the community hopes that the Prime Minister already in the advice given to him and while he may be thinking liping protection to "one British citizen" he will also think of the adreds of thousands of other British citizens who have no legal mection against insult, gratuitous abuse and vilification.

23rd April 1993

At the invitation of the Secretary General of the Organisation of Islamic Conference, a four-man delegation from the UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs (UKACIA) is leaving for Karachi loday to attend the 21st Islamic Foreign Ministers' Conference to be held in Karachi from 25th to 29th April 1993.

The main concerns the delegation will raise at the Conference will be the anguish caused by the continued publication of 'The Satanic Verses' and the tragic situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The UKACIA has been leading the campaign in asking all parties concerned to get 'The Satanic Verses' withdrawn from circulation and to provide a legal redress against sacrilege in the future. The delegation will press that the resolutions adopted at the previous Conferences be now implemented in full by all member states.

The earlier resolutions called for the banning of the book, asked its publishers for its total, world wide withdrawal from circulation, and adoption of sanctions against the publishing house that refuses to withdraw the profane book.

The situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina is a tragedy which touches not only the Muslim Ummah but the entire human race and makes our hearts bleed in agony and anger. Day after day we see on our television screens the most terrible suffering of Bosnian Muslims. Ethnic cleansing, rape and murder, even the slaughter of babies in their mother's arms, are hourly events. The aggressor is known. Yet the world stands by and the Bosnians are left to die like flies.

The UKACIA will call upon the Conference to take specific steps for the defence of the Bosnian republic and restoration of international legality in accordance with the decision of the London Conference on former Yugoslavia.

The delegation comprises:

Mr. Iqbal Sacranie - Joint Convenor of the UK Action

Committee

Mr. Bashir Mann - Secretary General, Islamic Defence

Council, Scotland

Dr. J. Qureshi - President, Muslim Doctors' Association

Mr. Tanzim Wasti - Secretary General, UK Islamic Mission

From the UKACIA Memorandum,
'Muslims and the Law in Multi-Faith Britain

- The Need for Reform' (June 1993)
to the Home Secretary for the consideration
of the Second Review of Race Relations Act 1976.

WE now live in a society which is not only multi-racial or multi-ethnic, but also multi-faith. Whilst legislation in the United Kingdom seeks to acknowledge the former, little regard has been paid by successive governments to the latter.

uffer various forms of discrimination in a number of social and usually without any form of legal redress. This has led for the simple reason that there is no proper basis for the most of the rights that constitute freedom of religion.

untially English law did not need to safeguard the rights and wims of other faiths by way of an express legal or constitutional rantee of the rights to freedom of religion given its development ipt from an Anglican Christian perspective. With no written matution in the conventional sense, the traditional common law much to civil liberties has simply been that everyone has a right to substantive the pleases so long as no provision of a positive law is stringed.

It not effect of these factors for Muslims is that we are free to pacise our faith in an environment theoretically devoid of mailments of our rights so to do. Nevertheless our inability to advate an inalienable right to religious freedom considerably reduces our position in law. The practical constraints come in the form of a legislative framework which at best is indifferent to our creds. In our case, "equality before the law" is a concept concerned only with equal access to the courts and legal procedures, and does not consider whether the remedies we seek are available. The hallmark of our society, however, ought to be that all individuals within it are able to attain equal treatment through the law. We do aspire to participate in the development of a society which is "genuinely pluralistic" and both "socially cohesive and culturally diverse" as envisaged by the Swan Committee (1985).

In this brief submission, we seek to highlight some of the areas in which the law is inadequate or discriminatory and where legislative action is required if freedom of religion and equality is to have any substance and if social cohesion, social peace and community relations are not to be undermined.

## Sacrilege and Incitement to Religious Hatred

MUSLIMS have no protection against having their faith reviled and

ndiculed in a scurrilous or contemptuous fashion. The offence caused to Muslims by the publication of *The Satanic Verses* by Viking Penguin has been acknowledged by the former Prime Minister, Mrs. Thatcher, and other ministers of Her Majesty's Government. The feeling of revulsion at the contents of the book were shared by the Muslims worldwide. The book was banned in all Muslim countries and several non-Muslim countries including China, India, South Africa and Sri Lanka. When the publishers failed to withdraw the book from circulation, attempts were made to use the available blasphemy laws against the publication and distribution. The Court which heard the application held that the common law offences of blasphemous libel and seditious libel did not extend to religions other than Christianity (R. v. Chief Metropolitan Stipendiary Magistrate, ex parte Choudhury (1991) 1 All ER 306.

Consequently the most publicised conflict between Muslim religious rights and English law resulted in a reassertion of the sad reality that the law offers little redress to Muslims when their fundamental beliefs and sanctities are vilified. It was not that the law was uncertain, it was clear that only the Anglican faith happened to be protected. The position of Muslims preceding the Court decision and subsequently has been well rehearsed elsewhere and is succinctly summarised in an exchange of correspondence between the UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs and John Patten (the Home Secretary at the time) and we shall not dwell on it here [See Appendix II of this book].

However, the unfairness and injustice inherent in the development of the law of blasphemy and its application was commented upon by a minority view of the Law Commission when they considered the question in 1985 (Law Commission Working Paper No. 79). The minority view attached particular importance to the defects in the existing offence that it afforded protection to one religion only. In their view rather than abolishing the common law offence of blasphemy the preferable course would be to enact a new offence which would be free of the defects of the present blasphemy law. As regards the curtailment of the freedom of expression, they took the view that it was a duty on all citizens in society with its multi-racial, multi-faith and secular make-up, not purposely to insult or outrage the religious feeling of others. They concluded that the drafting of a

offence, although difficult, could be achieved. Lord

\*do not subscribe to the view that the common law offence dhasphemous libel serves no useful purpose in the modern lim. On the contrary, I think that there is a case for legislation retending it to protect the religious beliefs and feelings of non-Christians. The offence belongs to a group of criminal offences designed to safeguard the internal tranquillity of the Kingdom. In an increasingly plural society such as that of modem Britain it is necessary not only to respect the differing religious beliefs, feelings and practices of all but also to protect them from scurrility, vilification, ridicule and contempt, . . . my criticism of the common law offence of blasphemy is not that it exists but that it is not sufficiently comprehensive. It is shackled by the chains of history. (R.V. Lemmon (1979) AC 617).

lamot be right in a multi-faith society that the laws of the land buld protect only one religious denomination. That is plain in inspect of religion, the government is in breach of international treaty obligations.

hesame can be said about the fact that there is no law on incitement religious hatred in Britain as there is in Northern Ireland revention of Incitement to Hatred Act (Northern Ireland) 1970).

#### What Needs to be Done

THE Race Relations Acts have been a significant step in seeking to have a positive effect in influencing community relations and social attitudes by a statutory declaration that everyone in Britain was henceforth to be treated on the basis of individual merit, irrespective of colour or race, and to provide an effective legal remedy for this type of discrimination. The adoption of a law, therefore, actively to promote equality represented a radical departure from the traditional neutrality and passivity of our legal system. On the same legal and social premises, there ought not to be any distinction drawn between racial or religious discrimination, both are socially divisive and morally reprehensible.

The approach adopted in the legal system in the promotion of equal opportunities for minority communities is clearly inadequate since it is race-oriented and relies largely on enforcement of the Race Relations Act 1976. The statutory definition within the Act is not sufficient in meeting the needs of Muslims since the discrimination suffered by them arises not only from membership of an ethnic group but also of a religious minority. On the other hand, it is the religious dimension of this discrimination which is in ascendancy given the changing perceptions of Muslims in British society as influenced by contemporary political events. Consequently Muslims are now more likely to suffer discrimination on grounds of their religion than on colour, race, ethnic or national origins or nationality as is provided for by the Race Relations Act 1976 (RRA 76).

The same logic which brought the Race Relations Act 1976 into being is the same logic which dictates that the time is now right for legislation in the critical area of religious discrimination. This is particularly so as regards Muslims since the protection afforded by the Act is marginal given the fact that we can be disadvantaged on racial grounds and/or because of our religion.

English law remains inadequate in relation to the standard set by international law in upholding the right to freedom of religion. Moreover, whilst the RRA 76 affords protection to some religious minorities, it fails to do so in the case of Muslims.

The inbuilt slant of English law, the race based approach to the elimination of discrimination suffered by ethnic minorities, and the lack of a right to freedom of religion have all served to ensure that Muslims, above all the minority communities, are left without legal redress when they suffer discrimination.

Moreover, the human rights perspective also demands that religious discrimination should be outlawed by legislation in keeping with the minimum guarantees agreed by States in international law.

It is therefore necessary that legislation be enacted as required by Article 4 of the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Intolerance and Discrimination.

## Appendix IV

were enacted in compliance with Article 4, statutory would be required in the following areas:-

#### dification

per ought to be legislation to criminalise vilification and ridicule applications beliefs, practices and sanctities. Such legislation could be application of the Canadian criminal code (Section 319) or as per and discrimination (Racial Vilification) Amendment Act 1989 application in Australia by the New South Wales State Parliament. The arrefers to the unlawful act which brings the statutory provisions apportation as follows:

"It is unlawful for a person, by a public act, to incite hatred towards, serious contempt for, or severe ridicule of a person or group of persons on the ground of the race of the person or members of the group."

legislation along the Canadian, Australian or Croatian lines would over vilification and incitement to religious hatred.

The defamation of a religious group can be seriously damaging and can have socially harmful and divisive consequences, both for the group maligned and for society as a whole. We recommend the enactment of appropriate legislation to protect members of a religious group against vilification and ridicule by reason of their membership of such a group. We recommend that the criminal law is more likely to provide effective protection than the civil law, but we do not exclude the possibility of re-examining civil remedies if criminal sanctions prove ineffective. A law is therefore absolutely necessary on the basis that any person who (a) uses words or publishes or distributes written or pictorial material which vilifies, threatens, abuses, insults or exposes members of a religious group to hatred, hostility or contempt by reason of their belonging to such group; or (b) with the deliberate intention of vilifying, threatening, abusing, insulting or exposing members of that religious group to hatred, hostility or contempt by reason of their belonging to such a group, commits a criminal offence.

We are not committed to any particular form of words as long as any

formulation embodies the principle that the law should protect religious groups against group defamation and against the publication or distribution of material, the deliberate purpose or intention of which is to abuse and vilify.

#### b. Incitement to Religious Hatred

IN addition to the above, it is suggested that amendments be made to Pan III of the Public Order Act, 1986, in particular Sections 18 and 19. We would recommend that the definition in Section 17 be amended to include hatred on the grounds of religion or belief, as well as the present ground of colour, race, nationality (including citizenship) or ethnic or national origin.

Incitement to religious hatred has been an offence in Northern Ireland since 1987 and, therefore, extending it to cover Britain raises no special questions of principle. We, therefore, wholly support the view of the CRE that a specific law against incitement to religious hatred should be introduced.

It is further suggested that the requirement for the consent of the Atomey-General be obtained before proceedings for enforcement may be instituted in England and Wales should be repealed. While it is accepted that care should always be taken before prosecutions for this kind of offence are instituted and that prosecutions should not be instituted which are frivolous, vexatious or designed to stop the legitimate expressions of opinion, we consider that this decision can be safely left to the ordinary prosecuting authorities.

#### c. Discrimination on Religious Grounds

THE case for discrimination along the lines of the Northern Ireland statutory provisions outlawing discrimination on religious grounds would eliminate the anomalies, deficiencies and lacunae in the existing legal system, which put some communities at a disadvantage and which do not take any or sufficient regard for religion as such and religious identity. The government's commitment to outlawing discrimination against groups and to equality of opportunity is, therefore, not discharged till religious discrimination is made unlawful. We urge the government to take this step urgently.

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Beyond Belief

New Statesman and Society (London), 4/138 (February 1991), pp. 17-18.

Looks at the Rushdie Affair in retrospect with special focus on the sufferings British Muslims had to undergo for protesting against the blasphemous book. Calls for a positive, reconciliatory response from the Muslim community to Rushdie's embracing of Islam.

ALLY, Muhammad Mashuq ibn

The Muslim Response (to Rushdie Affair)'

In: S. Lee (et al.), Law, Blasphemy and the Multi-Faith Society: Report of a Seminar. Organized by the Commission for Racial Equality and the Inter-Faith Network of the UK, September 1989.

London: Commission for Racial Equality, 1990, pp. 21-9.

Points out several instances of censorship in today's Britain while British Muslims are told to respect the freedom of expression. Argues for equality for all religious communities.

'Stranger Exiled from Home'

In: Dan Cohn-Sherbok (ed.), The Salman Rushdie Controversy in Interreligious Perspective.

Lampeter, UK: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1990, pp. 131-49.

Identifies Rushdie as 'a typical hybrid, the product of the bastardization of Indian culture, which began with the Christian missionary . . . ' Points to the intolerance in Britain towards minority culture, modes of behaviour and religion and concludes that 'democracy has yet to embrace the concept of cultural diversity'.

#### ASAD, Talal

Ethnography, Literature and Politics: Some Readings and Uses of Salman Rushdie's "The Satanic Verses" ' Cultural Anthropology (Washington, DC), 5/3 (1990), pp. 239-69.

Considers The Satanic Verses as a 'political act' and an 'encounter between Western modernity' and a non-Western Other. Brings out its political setting and deplores the pious horror of liberals over the book's symbolic burning in Bradford in the face of other instances of public burning of publications and legislative documents.

Confluralism and British Identity in the Wake of the Rushdie Affair' ar and Society (Stoneham, MA), 18/4 (1990), pp. 455-80.

mines why the British government took such a harsh stand on the protests by British Muslims against The Satanic Verses, in arring them as a threat to the British identity. Studies the whole arayet another symptom of British post-imperial identity in crisis.

ENNETT, Clinton

Rushdie Affair: Some Underlying Issues' Dicemment (London), 4/2 (1990), pp. 3-11.

fineives the Rushdie Affair as a catalyst for the crucial issue of the position of Muslims living outside the House of Islam. Endorses the nasterly (!) survey of Ruthven in A Satanic Affair.

BENTON, Sarah

Do We Really Want Freedom?'

New Statesman and Society (London), 2/39 (March 1989), pp. 12-13.

Commenting on 'attitudes to freedom of expression', it points out that his not just some Muslims who want to silence unwelcome voices. It is quite a common wish in Britain'.

BHABHA, Homi

'Novel Metropolis'

New Statesman and Society (London), 3/88 (1990), pp. 16-18.

Analyses the issue of migration in The Satanic Verses. Also explains the migrants' aversion to 'assimilation' as the basis for integration in a national or global community.

BHARUCHA, Rustom

'The Rushdie Affair: Secular Bigotry & the Ambivalence of Faith' Third Text (London), No. 11 (Summer 1990), pp. 62-8.

Affirms that 'Rushdie cannot pretend to disguise his irreverence because it is written into the very fabric of the book'. Brands certain passages of The Satanic Verses as 'clearly the mischief of a non-believer'.

BILGRAMI, Akeel

'Rushdie and Reform of Islam'

Economic and Political Weekly (Bombay), 25/12 (1990), pp. 605-8.

States that 'Reformation' which would have relegated religion to the

private realm has not occurred in Islam hence the Muslim outcry over The Satanic Verses.

BILMORIA. Purusottama

'The Jaina Spirit in Salman Rushdie' South Asian Bulletin (New York), 9/2 (1989), pp. 57-64.

Discovers the Jaina doctrine of Anekanta-vada (against one-sidedness) in Rushdie's works! Points to the resemblance between Nagachandra's apocryphal Ravanic Verses written in 1100 CE and The Satanic Verses in that both of them oppose the orthodoxy.

'Blasphemy Today: The Satanic Verses in the High Court' New Humanist (London), 105/1 (May 1990), pp. 12-14.

Summarizes the British Muslims' attempt to prosecute The Satanic Verses under the criminal law; the appeal heard by the Queen's Bench Division of the High Court from 26th February to 5th March, 1990 in London and the judgement that neither the common law of blasphemy nor of sedition could apply to The Satanic Verses.

BOYD, Andrew

'A Look at the Blasphemy Law', Parts 1 and 2. Prophecy Today (London), 5/5-6 (September/October and November/ December 1989), pp. 6-7 and 10-11.

Examines in the wake of the Rushdie Affair the Muslim demand for changes in Britain's blasphemy law, with the conclusion that rather than extending the law, it should remain as it is. Reports that 'National Front members planned to burn a copy of the Koran in Dewsbury."

CAUTE, David

'Prophet Motive'

New Statesman and Society (London), 3/88 (1990), pp. 18-19.

Brings out the unwillingness of writers and intellectuals to advance their understanding of British Muslims. Studying the Rushdie Affair it affirms: 'The underlying issue is not only freedom of expression but the vast pain of integration within the disdainful host society."

CHRYSSIDES, George

'Fact and Fiction in the Salman Rushdie Affair' Discernment (London), 4/2 (1990), pp. 21-2, 23.

Holds that The Satanic Verses could not be published in the name of artistic freedom and regrets the inadequacy of British law which allows

## Bibliography

a deceased religious leader without fear of any legal

of the Discussion on British Blasphemy Law and the Affair)

s lee (et al.), Law, Blasphemy and the Multi-Faith Society: Report La Suminar. Organized by the Commission for Racial Equality and Inter-Faith Network of the UK, September 1989. moon Commission for Racial Equality, 1990, pp. 56-62.

thong the options considered to deal with the issues generated by The Junic Verses controversy the contributors to the Seminar discuss the attention of the law of blasphemy and some new provision to cover entement to religious hatred and group libel.

COTTLE, Simon

Reporting the Rushdie Affair: A case study in the orchestration of public opinion'.

Pace and Class (London), 32/4 (1991), pp. 45-61.

Anin-depth account how public opinion is constructed and orchestrated. With pointed reference to the media story of a Muslim rally in Birmingham against The Satanic Verses, it shows how its 'conflict' and 'trouble' aspects were exaggerated.

DAWKINS, Richard

'A Deplorable Affair'

New Humanist (London), 104/2 (May 1989), p. 9.

Laments that 'our whole society is soft on religion. Even secular activists are incomprehensibly soft when it comes to religion. Our best weapon is education, especially education in the scientific world-view'.

DAY, Michael

The Salman Rushdie Affair: Implications for the CRE and Race

In: S. Mendus (et al.), Free Speech: Report of a Seminar. Organized by the Commission for Racial Equality and the Policy Studies Institute September, 1989.

London: Commission for Racial Equality, 1990, pp. 104-10.

Analyses the main reasons of the Muslims' grievance and concedes that they have cause for complaint. Studies the Rushdie Affair in the context of Race Relations and presses for a meaningful dialogue.

DECTER, Midge
The Rushdiad (Rushdie Affair)'
Commentary (New York), 87/6 (1989), pp. 18–23.

Condemns Rushdie's 'hounding' (1) and makes an impassioned plea for regaining faith in the power of words. Describes how American writers rallied against the forces of obscurantism.

'Discussion (on British Blasphemy Law)'

In S Lee (et al.), Law, Blasphemy and the Multi-Faith Society: Report of a Semmar. Organized by the Commission for Racial Equality and the Inter-Faith Network of the UK, September, 1989.
London. Commission for Racial Equality, 1990, pp. 47–55.

Discusses the main components of the Muslims' grievance: Rushdie hurting their religious sensibilities and degrading them in their own eyes and in the eyes of others. Takes note of the issue of 'group libel' in this context.

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DYSON, Anthony
'Looking Below the Surface'

In: Dan Cohn-Sherbok (ed.), The Salman Rushdie Controversy in Intereligious Perspective.

Lampeter, UK: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1990, pp. 59-69.

Disagrees with the view that any real progress to counter blasphemy can be made by developing the law. Stresses 'the need for strengthening of the bonds between the different religious bodies in Britain'.

EASTERMAN, Daniel

'A Sense of Proportion: The Rushdie Affair' Index on Censorship, No. 4 (April 1990), pp. 9–11.

A former lecturer in Islamic studies gives vent to his deep aversion to Islam, Islamic law and religious orthodoxy. Demands of British Muslims tolerance and reasonableness (!).

FARUOI, M.H.

'The Satanic Verses: Publishing Sacrilege is Not Acceptable' Impact International (London), 18/20 (1988), pp. 12–14.

Deplotes the freedom to publish and spread obscene sacrilege and make abusiness out of it. Describes the Muslim demands as quite reasonable.

ystanic Verses: Dear Mr. Baker, Please do not Rush to Judgement' an International (London), 19/3 (1989), pp. 7-8.

min response to the British Secretary of State for Education and Mr. Kenneth Baker's article 'Argument before Arson' (*The Mr. Sth. January 1989*), it absolves the British Muslims of Baker's set of being arsonists and explains their stance on freedom of mession and culture.

The Author as the Stooge' hoper International (London), 20/4 (1990), pp. 16–18.

Midsthat the Rushdie Affair has remained unresolved basically because able dismissive attitude of the publishers Viking-Penguin to consider the Muslim demands.

FISCHER, Michael M.J. and ABEDI, Mehdi

Bombay Talkies, the Word and the World: Salman Rushdie's Satanic Verses'

Cultural Anthropology (Washington, DC), 5/2 (1990), pp. 107-59.

tramines The Satanic Verses as a modernist writing and explains away the controversy generated by it with reference to the immigrant politics in Britain, the rivalry between Saudi and Iranian fundamentalism, communal politics in India and anti-Benazir politics in Pakistan. Endorses some of the fabrications in The Satanic Verses about Islamic history and Muslims.

GANOUSHI, Rashid

'Europe and Islam - Co-operation or Confrontation?'

In: T.A. Linstad and S.E. Maoula (eds.), International Seminar on Islam: Debates on the Rushdie Affair.

Oslo, Norway: Muslim Magazine, 1990, pp. 35-40.

Surveys the relations between the West and Islam and finds the Western attitude towards Islam marred by distortion and exploitation. Calls for a new, healthy dialogue between Muslims and the West for future good relations.

GOERINGER, Conrad

'Lessons from The Satanic Verses'

American Atheist (Austin, TX), 31/9 (1989), pp. 32-6.

By the Director of the Tucson Chapter of American Atheists, it strongly

condemns the Muslim campaign and attempts to make a case for unbridled freedom.

#### GREEN, S.F.D.

'Beyond the Satanic Verses'

Encounter (London), 74/5 (June 1990), pp. 12–20.

Views the Rushdie Affair as a conflict between the conservative religion and the liberal society and as the beginning of a militant Islamic presence in British public life. Studies the issue also in the context of multi-culturalism and multi-faithism.

#### HAMMAD, Ahmad Zaki

'Between Fairness & Freedom'

Islamic Horizons (Plainfield, Indiana), 18/1-4 (1989), pp. 40-3.

Greed and hate, it is concluded, lie at the heart of *The Satanic Verses* controversy Rushdie's work is seen as a deliberate exploitation of religion for commercial purposes.

## HARTLEY, Anthony

'Saving Mr. Rushdie?'

Encounter (London), 73/1 (1989), pp. 73-7.

Concedes that *The Satanic Verses* does contain much that is profoundly offensive to a believing Muslim. Exaggerates the threat to Rushdie's life in the wake of the *fatwa*. Calls the *fatwa* 'a monstrous infringement of national sovereignty'.

#### HERRICK, Jim

'The Might of the Pen: Rushdie's Imaginative Novel' New Humanist (London), 104/1 (May 1989), pp. 6-7.

Sees Rushdie's novel as 'a courageous tribute to the power of imagination' and discovers that the 'humanist spirit pervades the novel'. Points out that not only Muslim sanctities but others too are satirized in *The* Satanic Verses.

#### HUSSAIN, Mushahid

'The Rushdie Affair: A Muslim's Perspective'
Index on Censorship, No. 4 (April 1990), pp. 12-13.

Relates the concern and anguish of Muslims in the wake of the Rushdie Affair and sees no artistic merit in *The Satanic Verses*. Records the Western countries' officially sponsored violence on foreign soil.

NAYATULLAH, Sohail

merslanding the Postmodern World: Why Khomeini wants Rushdie

Text (London), No. 11 (Summer 1990), pp. 91-8.

formers the Khomeini/Rushdie discourse in a politics of divergent of divergent of the real. Points to several similarities between the two (!).

#### RVING, T.B.

'The Rushdie Confrontation'

blamic Order (Karachi), 11/3 (1989), pp. 43-51.

Summarizing the contents of *The Satanic Verses* it is dismissed as a simply bizarre' work written in 'offensive and utter poor taste'.

#### JAIN, Madhu (et al.)

Salman Rushdie: Satanic Storm'

India Today (15th March, 1989), pp. 14-24.

Based upon a special correspondent's analysis, it surveys the Muslim and non-Muslim reaction to the publication of Rushdie's book and the Ayatollah's fatwa in Bombay, Islamabad, Srinagar, New Delhi, London and New York.

#### JONES, Peter

'Respecting Beliefs and Rebuking Rushdie'

British Journal of Political Science (Cambridge), 20/4 (1990), pp. 415-37.

Examining 'whether a principle of "respect for beliefs" can provide adequate reason for limiting freedom of expression', it finds 'this principle untenable', for there cannot be a sound 'basis for setting limits to freedom of expression'.

#### JUSSAWALLA, Feroza

'Resurrecting the Prophet: The Case of Salman, the Otherwise' Public Culture (Philadelphia PA), 2/1 (1989), pp. 106-17.

Analysing the novel it shows how Rushdie tries to 'escape the responsibilities of the monstrosities he perpetuates' and how he hides his real political motives behind the veil of modernism.

KING, Preston

'Rushdie and Revelation'

In: S. Mendus (et al.). Free Speech: Report of a Seminar. Organized by the Commission for Racial Equality and the Policy Studies Institute, Sentember 1989.

London Commission for Racial Equality, 1990, pp. 28-48.

Provides a brief history of the Western attitude towards revelation and regards the Rushdie Affair as closely tied to the religious and revelatory question. Holds that Islam will survive Rushdie's assault as Christianity and Judaism have survived similar assaults in the past.

KING-HAMILTON, Alan,

'Legal Position of Blasphemy'

In S. Lee (et al.), Law, Blasphemy and the Multi-Faith Society: Report of a Seminar. Organized by the Commission for Racial Equality and the Inter-Faith Network of the UK, September 1989.

London: Commission for Racial Equality, 1990, pp. 40-3.

Spells out the difficulties in the extension of the law of blasphemy to protect religious other than Christianity. Agrees that religious feelings of individuals should be protected.

LEE. Simon

'Free Speech and Religious Freedom'

lat S. Lee (et al.), Law, Blasphemy and the Multi-Faith Society: Report of a Seminar Organized by the Commission for Racial Equality and the Inter-Faith Network of the UK, September 1989.

London: Commission for Racial Equality, 1990, pp. 4–20.

Points to a whole range of restrictions on free speech in Britain. Treks through a binef history of blasphemy and explores possible solutions for the Rushdie Affair. Calls for rationalizing the law of blasphemy and increment to religious hatred.

LEWIS, Bernard

Behind the Rushdie Affair'

American Scholar (Washington, DC) (Spring, 1991), pp. 185-96.

Sets forth the Islamic legal and historical issues raised by Ayatollah Khomeni's fawa. Sifting Islamic history, it examines precedents, particularly from the life of the Prophet, for actions taken against apostates, and blasphemers and those guilty of insulting the Prophet. Calls into question Khomenin's jurisdiction in judging a citizen of a non-Muslim country. Also discusses at length the socio-legal implications for Muslims living in a non-Islamic society.

Book Burning to Vigil: Bradford Muslims a Year On' (London), 4/2 (1990), pp. 26–34.

Index on the Bradford Muslims, their profile, their campaign and why applayed such a key role in the affair. Surveys also the part played the majority community, particularly the Bishop's role in the approximately.

UCHTENSTEIN, Leonie

Rubble, Steiner, Sobol and Others: Moral Boundaries' brounter (London), 73/3 (1989), pp. 34-42.

Nuls out that The Satanic Verses compounds blasphemy with betrayal. hints to Rushdie's 'Marxist leanings'. Refers constantly to the Muslim mathema, danger and their (!) breach of peace'.

LYNCH, James

Cultural Pluralism, Structural Pluralism and the United Kingdom' In S. Poulter (et al.), Britain: A Plural Society: Report of a Seminar. Organized by the Commission for Racial Equality and the Runnymede Trust, October, 1989.

London: Commission for Racial Equality, 1990, pp. 29-43.

Elaborates the meaning of cultural pluralism and its relevance in Britain and how far the needs of minority communities should be accommodated.

McEWAN, Ian

'Do You Dare Like This Book?'

New Statesman and Society (London), 2/39 (March 1989), pp. 11-12.

Insinuates that the poison of intimidation is infecting the free exchange of ideas. Speaks disparagingly of the Ayatollah and endorses Rushdie's ravings.

MAITLAND, Sara

'Blasphemy and Creativity'

In: Dan Cohn-Sherbok (ed.), The Salman Rushdie Controversy in Interreligious Perspective.

Lampeter, UK: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1990, pp. 115-30.

Defends The Satanic Verses for being an attempt to explore what belief, or faith, is and why it matters. Dismisses religion, be it Christianity, Islam or any other, as 'just a myth, a social construct' . . . and 'the concept of legal blasphemy as theologically stupid'.

MAZRUI Ali A.

'The Satanic Verses or A Satanic Novel'

Also published in Africa Events (London), 517 (July 1989), pp. 30—40, and 58 (August 1989), pp. 37–41; Alternatives, 15/1 (Winter 1990), pp. 97-121

The Satanic Verses: Novelist's Freedom vs Worshipper's Dignity' Impact International (London), 19/7 (1989), pp. 10–15.

Also published entitled 'Satanic Verses or a Satanic Novel' in The Kiss of Judas, op. cit., pp. 61–90; in Free Speech: Report of a Seminar, op. cit., pp. 79–103; in Third World Quarterly (London), 12/1 (1990), pp. 116-39; in A.A. Mazzui, Cultural Forces in World Politics (James Currey, London, 1990), pp. 83–98; and its abridged version in The Rushdie File, op. cit., pp. 220–8.

The Saturic Verses is seen as a grossly anti-Muslim work written out of basically financial and mercenary motives. Demonstrates how it is sheer 'hate literature'.

'Witness for the Prosecution: A Cross-Examination on the Satanic Verses'

Third Text (London), No. 11 (Summer 1990), pp. 31-40.

Deals with the Rushdie Affair in the context of the following issues: death punishment, incitement to violence, hate literature, sacrilege and blasphemy, freedom of expression, libelling the dead and censorship.

'A Testimony'
Africa Events 7/2 (February 1991), pp. 37–9.

In this interview Mazrui explains the Muslim insistence on withdrawing
The Satonic Verses completely from circulation, as a logical outcome of
Rushdie's announcement of embracing Islam. Asks Rushdie not to be
a beneficiary of commercialized blasphemy, if he is a sincere Muslim.

MENDUS, Susan,

'The Tigers of Wrath and the Horses of Instruction'

In: S. Mendus (et al.), Free Speech: Report of a Seminar. Organized by the Commission for Racial Equality and the Policy Studies Institute, Sentember 1989.

London: Commission for Racial Equality, 1990, pp. 3-17.

Discovers the following themes at the heart of the Rushdie Affair: rationality versus sanctity, choice versus tradition and the sovereignty of the individual versus the identity of the group.

mood, Tariq

Asian Muslims and the Rushdie Affair'

Political Quarterly (Oxford), 61/2 (1990), pp. 143-60.

in the focus on the ethnic history of British Muslims in Bradford and implant, it discusses their conservatism, religious devotionalism and showe traditionalism. Refutes the charge of fundamentalism against him Muslims.

Medims, Race and Equality in Britain: Some Post-Rushdie Affair Metetions'

hird Text (London), No. 11 (Summer 1990), pp. 127-34.

the sout that 'it was not the exploration of religious doubt but the impooning of the Prophet that provoked the anger'. Re-echoes Ruhven, A Satanic Affair, in saying 'the anger over The Satanic Verses motes much a Muslim response but a South Asian Muslim response moted in its reverence of the Prophet'.

MULLEN, Peter

'Satanic Asides'

In Dan Cohn-Sherbok (ed.), The Salman Rushdie Controversy in Intereligious Perspective.

Lampeter, UK: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1990, pp. 30-1, 33-5.

Condemns the arrogance of the liberal attitude towards the religion and holds that 'Rushdie has done a disservice to us all. By his clever derogatory remarks in *The Satanic Verses* he has undermined our evaluation of what is supremely valuable in the religious tradition . . . '

MURRAY, John G.

'The Right to Disrespect'

American Atheist (Austin, TX), 31/9 (1989), pp. 4-10.

Rules out any respect for religious doctrines and argues for even legalizing it. Its anti-religion stance borders on gross tendentiousness and hysteria.

NAIR, Rukmini Bhaya

'Text and Pre-Text: History as Gossip in Rushdie's Novels' Economic and Political Weekly (Bombay), 24/18 (1989), pp. 994-1000.

Rushdie's work is seen as a creative re-organization of the received narrative of Islam and gossip as a literary weapon against the claims of historical truth and religious morality. Tries to explain the Muslim reaction.

NAIR. Rukmini Bhaya and BATTACHARYA, Rimli Saiman Rushdie: Migrant in the Metropolis' Third Test (London), No. 11 (Summer 1990), pp. 17–30.

Posits that opinions in the metropolis are generally articulated in two main centres - media and academia - and the collusive interaction between the two is quite evident in the Rushdie Affair.

NEUREITER, Anton (et al.)
'Blasphemy is Enlightenment'

American Atheist (Austin, TX), 31/9 (1989), pp. 47–52.

Surveying the Muslim protest against Rushdie's abusive work, it brands it as 'Inquisition' and condemns the cowardly and bigoted states that banned The Satanic Verses. Discovers in the whole affair the ebbing away of the Enlightenment.

NEWBIGIN, Lesslie
'Blasphemy and the Free Society'
Discernment (London), 4/2 (1990), pp. 12–18.

Contributed by a renowned theologian it traces the creation of the free society and its elimination of the sacred and concludes that a society without a sense of the sacred is bound to dissolve into nihilism. Vindicates stoully reverence for the sacred.

O'HAIR, Madalyn
'Red Herring Rushdie (A Chronology)'

American Atheist (Austin, TX), 31/9 (1989), pp. 12–31.

Documents news and events related to the Rushdie Affair up to 14th February, 1990 with a marked bias in Rushdie's favour.

The Theopolitics of the Rushdie Case'
American Atheist (Austin, TX), 31/9 (1989), pp. 57-8.

Sees the Rushdie Affair as the attempt of a growing religion to protect itself from new ideas. Warns against the threat of Muslim fundamentalism.

PAPASTERGIADIS, Nikos
'Ashis Nandy: Dialogue and the Diaspora – A Conversation'
Third Text (London), No. 11 (Summer 1990), pp. 99–108.

Focuses on the Rushdie Affair in terms of its broader consequ-

on-the contemporary position of the artist, the relationship between yealar and the sacred in modernity, the distinction between high and popular culture, non-Western cultures branded as bearers of admentalism and fetishization of freedom.

AREKH, Bhikhu

Retween Holy Text and Moral Void'

In Statesman and Society (London), 2/42 (March 1989), pp. 29-33.

framines The Satanic Verses in the context of the migrant experience addiscusses its impact on fellow immigrants. Recognizes that some of spassages 'do demean Muslims in their own and others' eyes'.

The Rushdie Affair and the British Press' Social Studies Review (Oxford), 5/2 (1989), pp. 44-7.

This masterly survey of the British press demonstrates how it 'made little attempt to articulate and understand the Muslim complaint against. The Satanic Verses and sought instead to bludgeon the protesters into slence.

Britain and the Social Logic of Pluralism'
In: S. Poulter (et al.), Britain: A Plural Society: Report of a Seminar.
Organized by the Commission for Racial Equality and the Runnymede
Trust, October 1989.
London: Commission for Racial Equality, 1990, pp. 58-77.

Dealing, in the main, with the effects of post-war immigration on the British society and the future direction the pluralistic British society should take, it makes passing references to the Rushdie Affair.

'The Rushdie Affair and the British Press: Some Salutary Lessons' In: S. Mendus (et al.), Free Speech: Report of a Seminar. Organized by the Commission for Racial Equality and the Policy Studies Institute, September 1989.

London: Commission for Racial Equality, 1990, pp. 59-78.

Also published in Dan Cohn-Sherbok (ed.), The Salman Rushdie
Lampeter IIK: The Edwin Agents.

Lampeter, UK: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1990, pp. 71–95.

Critically examines both the liberal and conservative British newspapers' reaction to the Rushdie Affair and censures their insensitivity and self-righteousness. Criticizes also their campaign for the inviolability of free speech.

'How Shall We Talk About Rushdie?' (Review Article). Futures (special issue on 'Islam and the Future'), 23/3 (April 1991), pp.

While reviewing Kabbani's, Shabbir Akhtar's and Sardar's and Davies's books on the Rushdie Affair, it notes four distinct discourses on the Affair: the Muslim, the religious, the racial and the diasporic. Asks Muslims to learn lessons from the West's surrender to the forces of secularism and modernity.

PIPES. Daniel

'The Ayatollah, the Novelist and the West' Commentary (New York), 87/6 (1989), pp. 9-17.

The Ayatollah's fatwa is perceived as a challenge to 'some of Western civilization's deepest values'. Recounts the Muslim campaign worldwide but concentrates on the Ayatollah's motives in pronouncing the fatwa and concludes that he 'succeeded in imposing his will on the West in a temporary and partial way'.

#### PISCATORI, James

'The Rushdie Affair and the Politics of Ambiguity' International Affairs (Cambridge), 66/4 (1990), pp. 767-89.

Examines Rushdie's challenge to Islamic tradition in questioning established religious and political authority. Analysing the Muslim responses to The Salanic Verses, it concludes that the idea of an Islamic force in international relations is misleadingly simplified.

#### POULTER, Sebastian

'Cultural Pluralism and its Limits: A Legal Perspective' In: S. Poulter (et al.), Britain: A Plural Society: Report of a Seminar. Organized by the Commission for Racial Equality and the Runnymede Trust, October 1989.

London: Commission for Racial Equality, 1990, pp. 3-28.

In the wake of the Rushdie Affair it aims at scrutinizing the concept of a multi-cultural Britain and cultural pluralism in English law, education, employment and religious observances and on the question of differential treatment it argues for a careful analysis of issues and some flexibility.

and the Cowardice of the West' Atheist (Austin, TX), 31/9 (1989), pp. 55-6.

the European reaction to the Rushdie Affair and their executed of Muslim fundamentalism as an omen of the intellectual

IN. Miron

Inhermal Struggle: The Rushdie Affair and the Prospects for the

M. Rezun (ed.), Iran at the Crossroads.

inder, CO: Westview Press. 1989, pp. 201-18.

Into the reasons why the Ayatollah issued the fatwa against Rushdie alisinternal and international dimensions. Looks also at the fall-out the Rushdie Affair

ROSE, Aubrey

Officulties in the Extension of the Blasphemy Law in Britain' In S. Lee (et al.), Law, Blasphemy and the Multi-Faith Society: Report of a Seminar. Organized by the Commission for Racial Equality and the Inter-Faith Network of the UK, September 1989. London: Commission for Racial Equality, 1989, pp. 44-6.

Disapproves any extension of the existing law of blasphemy, for new revelations through medical and scientific discovery (!) may make today's blasphemy tomorrow's accepted doctrine.

SARDAR, Ziauddin

A Postmodern War of the Wor(1)ds: Putting Rushdie and His Defenders Through Their Paces' (Review Article)

Muslim World Book Review (Leicester), 10/3 (1990), pp. 3-17.

Surveys the writings on the Rushdie Affair, such as those of Akhtar, Fay Weldon and Anees and brings home the main points of the Muslim outrage over the publication of The Satanic Verses.

'The Rushdie Malaise: Orthodoxy of Doubt in the 'Little Room' of Postmodernist Fiction' (Review Article) Muslim World Book Review (Leicester), 11/1 (1990), pp. 3-19.

A remarkably insightful critique of writings, particularly of Ruthven on the Rushdie Affair. Apart from vindicating the Muslim stance on the issue, it explores in detail many dimensions of the Affair such as Orientalism, Western literary establishment and post-modernism, etc.

'Secularism's Grand Project'

Impact International (London), 20/4 (1990), pp. 12-14.

Elaborates the assaults of secular fundamentalists on Islam and Muslims, concluding that 'positive change is not possible unless Western society leams to tolerate pluralism other than on its own terms'.

'A Satanic Venture'

Al-Tawhid (Tehran), 6/2 (1989), pp. 10-18.

Perceives the publication of The Satanic Verses as a conspiracy of Western imperialism and explains why the Ayatollah and Iran took such a firm stand on the issue

SIDDIOUI, Kalim

'Islam - A Universal Message? What Europe can Learn from Islam' In T.A. Linstad and S.E. Maoula (eds.), International Seminar on Islam: Debates on the Rushdie Affair.

Oslo, Norway: Muslim Magazine, 1990, pp. 26-34.

Restates the European confrontation with Islam and elucidates the message and agenda of Islam. Perceives the publication of The Satanic Verses as the start of a final crusade.

SMOKER, Barbara

'Fundamentalist Moslem Violence in Britain' American Atheist (Austin, TX), 31/9 (1989), pp. 37-46.

Alarmingly reports that 'fundamentalist Moslems in Britain are carrying out acts of violence and inciting one another to murder . . . for the banning of a work of fiction'.

SPIVAK, Gayatri Chakravorty 'Reading the Satanic Verses'

Public Culture (Philadelphia, PA), 2/1 (1989), pp. 79-99.

Apart from containing a literary critical plot summary of The Satanic Verses it discusses the cultural politics of its (mis)reading with pointed reference to 'the anti-Enlightenment' behaviour of the Ayatollah.

SULFRI Sara

"Contraband Histories: Salman Rushdie and the Embodiment of Blas-

The Yale Review (New Haven, CT), 78/4 (1989), pp. 604-24.

Considers The Satanic Verses as 'a deeply Islamic book' and constantly

are molts to relate its episodes to Muslim history yet it deplores the furore that greeted its publication'.

Summary of the Discussion'

h S. Mendus (et al.), Free Speech: Report of a Seminar. Organized by he Commission for Racial Equality and the Policy Studies Institute, September 1989.

London: Commission for Racial Equality, 1990, pp. 111-18.

DIVINUEIMPIL

Most of the conclusions on the Affair are drawn in the contexts of the deprivation of the British Muslim community and of the press and writers' defence of Rushdie and treatment of Muslims as forces of darkness.

TAHERI, Amir

The Rushdie Affair: Reflections on an Invalid Fatwa' Index on Censorship, No. 4 (April 1990), pp. 14-16.

Written by a rabidly anti-Khomeini, an Iranian exile, it is solely preoccupied with discrediting the Islamic revolution of Iran and the Ayatollah Khomeini. Describes the freedom of expression as man's most vital victory through centuries which the Islamic tyrants intend to snatch.

TAYLOR, Charles

'The Rushdie Controversy'

Public Culture (Philadelphia, PA), 2/1 (1989), pp. 118-22.

A cogent piece arguing for limits on free speech and respect for religious feelings. It asks the Western liberal mind to learn to look outside its narrow worldview.

THURSBY, Gene R.

'Rushdie, Rajpal and Religious Controversy in British India' Proceedings of the Eleventh International Symposium on Asian Studies (Hong Kong), 1989, pp. 423-34.

Points to the similarities in The Satanic Verses and a number of polemical offensive works that appeared in British India in the 1920s which Muslims regarded as painfully unacceptable. Provides also a brief history of the prosecution of such polemical writers in British India.

TWEED, James

'True Faith' New Statesman and Society (London), 4/138 (February 1991), p. 19.

A brilliant piece detailing restrictions on the freedom of expression in the West even in the post-The Satanic Verses period: Robert Maxwell pulping 20,000 copies of True Faith in deference to the wishes of the Evangelist Alliance and protests by feminists, including Fay Weldon, against Ellis's American Psycho.

#### UNTERMAN, Alan

"A Jewish Perspective on the Rushdie Affair"

In: Dan Cohn-Sherbok (ed.), The Salman Rushdie Controversy in Interreligious Perspective.

Lampeter, UK: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1990, pp. 97-114.

Dwells on the religious differences among Jews, Christians and Muslims. Disapproves Chief Rabbi Jakobovits's view that a work such as The Salanic Verses should not be allowed, by law, to be published. Finds it ironic that Muslims have attempted to prosecute Rushdie under the blasphemy law, for it could prohibit the publication of certain Islamic writings on the grounds of objections from members of other religions.

#### VEER, Peter Van Der

'Satanicor Angelic? The Politics of Religious and Literary Inspiration' Public Culture (Philadelphia, PA), 2/1 (1989), pp. 100-5.

Sees The Satanic Verses as 'a major political-literary event' with its 'attacks on Islam's moral absolutism and its treatment of women'. Although recognizing the novel as offensive and acknowledging the Muslim outrage, the author prefers 'to take sides with an apostate Muslim - Rushdie'.

#### VETTA, Atam

'A Contract with the Devil' Impact International (London), 20/4 (1990), pp. 5-8.

Quoting some of the blasphemous sentences from the book, the author explains why The Satanic Verses is offensive even to an agnostic Hindu like himself. Strongly argues for its withdrawal for it is seen 'as a continuing provocation'.

### Bibliography

WAI TER Nicholas Blasphemy Ancient and Modern' New Humanist, 104/4 (1990), pp. 9-11.

Surveys the historical development of the blasphemy law and argues that the most desirable thing to do with this law is to abolish it as its "... extension could open up Pandora's box'.

'Blasphemy: Punishment is Worse than Practice' Index on Censorship, (April 1990), pp. 21-2.

As an official of the Rationalist Press and Secretary of the Committee against Blasphemy Law, Walter attempts to defend absolute freedom of expression and condemns any legal protection for religious feelings.

### WARD, Keith

'The Nature of Blasphemy'

In: S. Lee (et al.), Law, Blasphemy and the Multi-Faith Society: Report of a Seminar. Organized by the Commission for Racial Equality and the Inter-Faith Network of the UK, September 1989. London: Commission for Racial Equality, 1989, pp. 30-9.

Addressing the main components of blasphemy, its place in today's society and the law of blasphemy, it concludes that 'from a Christian point of view a law of blasphemy is actually rather difficult to sustain'.

#### WEALE, Albert

'Freedom of Speech vs. Freedom of Religion?'

In: S. Mendus (et al.), Free Speech: Report of a Seminar. Organized by the Commission for Racial Equality and the Policy Studies Institute. September 1989.

London: Commission for Racial Equality, 1990, pp. 49-58.

Considers the principles defining and limiting the practice of freedom of expression. Suggests the setting up of an independent council, rather than extending the law of blasphemy, with powers to decide whether a publication was blasphemous or not.

WEIR, Stuart

'The Sound of Silence'

New Statesman and Society (London), 2/38 (1989), pp. 10-11.

Holds that 'Khomeini's incitement to murder Rushdie strikes at the very heart of our freedom. Inquires into the silence both of the Conservative government and Labour opposition, in expressing their outrage and finds baser interests at work in the body politic'.

'Death Sentences'

New Statesman and Society (London), 4/138 (February 1991), pp. 16-17.

Considers the resumption of diplomatic relations between Iran and Britain as an act of 'betrayal' by the British government. Censures the Conservative and Labour parties, the Church of England and several writers on not defending the freedom of expression.

WELLER, Paul

'Literature Update on the Salman Rushdie Affair' Discernment (London), 4/2 (1990), pp. 35-41.

A useful annotated bibliography of some books, press statements and articles on the Rushdie Affair till February 1990.

"The Rushdie Affair, Plurality of Values and the Ideal of a Multi-Cultural Society"

Navet Papers 2 (October 1990), pp. 1-12.

Holds that the 'debate about the relationship of free speech and social responsibility is central to the Rushdie Affair. Emphasizes the need for more considered public debate in a calmer atmosphere for strengthening a multi-faith society such as that of Britain.

The Rushdie Controversy and Inter-Faith Relations'
In: Dan Cohn-Sherbok (ed.), The Salman Rushdie Controversy in Intereligious Perspective.

Lampeter, UK: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1990, pp. 37-57.

States the Inter-Faith Network's position on the Affair. Records also the stances of radical Christians, Chief Rabbi, Lord Jakobovits and the World Conference on Religion and Peace.

'Words for Salman Rushdie (Writers Support Rushdie)'
New Statesman and Society (London), 2/43 (1989), pp. 24-30.

Contributed by a host of literary figures it demonstrates their unqualified support for Rushdie. The lone voice of dissent is Rana Kabbani, holding

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while responsible for resurrecting medieval prejudices against Islam

MFAR, S.M.

sum and the Freedom of Speech'

1 T.A. Linstad and S.E. Maoula (eds.), International Seminar on the Rushdie Affair.

Olo, Norway: Muslim Magazine, 1990, pp. 19-25.

Oulines the limits of the freedom of speech in Islam which bars one hundiculing others, particularly their religious beliefs and sanctities.

# Supplementary Bibliography

Books

BOWEN, David G.

The Satanic Verses: Bradford Responds

Ikley, UK: Bradford and Ilkley Community College, 1992, 82pp.

This collection of essays by both Muslim and non-Muslim scholars does not 'attempt to explain away Muslim anger or justify liberal response'. Rather it explores emotional investment in religious beliefs and urges sharing these investments for a better understanding of faiths.

EASTERMAN, Daniel

New Jerusalems. Reflections on Islam, Fundamentalism and the Rushdie Affair

London: Grafton, 1992, 240pp. £5.99.

An academic with a special study of Islam turned into a bestselling thriller writer, Easterman regards the 'Islamic laws of holy war and the execution of apostates' as 'notorious obstacles'. Hurls many allegations against Islamic laws and Muslim conduct.

KHAN, Abdus Samad Reply to Salman Rushdie and His Supporters Karachi: Sughra Publications, 1991, 324pp. Rs.100.

### KHARROUFAH, Ala'ul Deen

The Judgement of Islam on the Crimes of Salman Rushdie - 'Death Sentence Still in Force.'

Kuala Lumpur: Percetakan Sentosa, 1991, 122pp.

Written originally in Arabic by a leading Islamic scholar well grounded in both the Shari'ah and Western law, this work has been translated also into French and Malay. Having examined the views of standard authorities on Shari'ah, the author concludes that Rushdie is an apostate and the only course open to him is repentance by way of a total withdrawal and pulping of his sacrilegious work.

### MACDONOGH, Steve

The Rushdie Letters: Freedom to Speak, Freedom to Write Co. Kerry (Ireland): 1992, 189pp. £7.95.

Compiled by Article 19, of the defence by writers of Rushdie, it records letters by writers in support of the novelist. Includes also Rushdie's speech at the Columbia University.

### MADANI, Mohammad Asrar

Verdict of Islamic Law on Blasphemy and Apostasy London: The Open Press Ltd., 1991, 156pp. \$14.95.

Explains why blasphemy and apostasy are considered such serious crimes in Islam. Reference is made to several incidents in Islamic history involving these crimes. Though Madani justifies Khomeimi's fatwā, he does not discuss the Rushdie affair.

### MALIK, Akhar Ali

'Satanic Verses', Salman Rushdie and Muslims: A General and Legal View

London: Unique Books, 1991, 148pp.

'Satanic Verses' - Was it Worth all the Fuss? A Muslim Lawyer's Viewpoint

London: Unique Books, 1991, 21pp. £10.50.

These two books deal with the legal aspect of the Affair.

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### mck. David M.

tenic Voices - Ancient and Modern

mm Keynes: Mustaqim Art and Literature, 1992, 224pp.

htts into Rushdie's motives and his hidden agenda in writing *The Satanic* mus. Brands his work as primarily a chronicle of schizophrenia. Also just at the conspiracies of free masonry and Zionism against Muslims.

### Articles

### ALL Ausaf

The Westernization of a Nice Muslim Boy'
The Universal Message (Karachi), 12/10 (1991), pp. 25–32.

Reports how a young Muslim boy, lacking Islamic upbringing, might turn into what Rushdie is.

### ALIBHAI, Yasmin

'Beyond Belief'

New Statesman & Society (London), 4/138 (1991), pp. 17-18.

Criticizes the liberal response to The Satanic Verses and asks Muslims to thange their attitude towards Rushdie in the interest of their own cause.

### AZM. Sadik J. AL-

"The Importance of Being Earnest About Salman Rushdie"
Die Welt des Islams (Leiden), 31/1 (1991), pp. 1-49.

Traces the influence of Western literary Orientalism on Rushdie's work and describes some recent irreverent works in the Arab world. Presents himself as another victim of the 'conservative and fundamentalist Islamic fury' and endorses Rushdie's challenge to Muslim orthodoxy.

### RADAWI, Zaki

'Spurn the Book, Spare the Man'

In: D.E. Bowen (ed.), The Satanic Verses: Bradford Responds
Ilkley, UK: Bradford and Ilkley Community College, 1992, pp. 51-3.

A reprint of Badawi's piece published earlier in The Guardian (27th February 1989). While conceding Rushdie's offensiveness, he denounces the fatwa on the ground that 'Islamic criminal law cannot be imposed either from the outside or by Islamic bodies within Britain'.

#### BADER, Rudolf

'The Satanic Verses: An Intercultural Experiment by Salman Rushdie' International Fiction Review: 19/2 (1992), pp. 65–75.

Emphasizes the elements of intertextuality and Western literary tradition in Rushdie's novel.

#### BIELBY, Nicholas

'Bless Thee, Bottom, Bless Thee! Thou Art Translated: Being and Believing in the Satanic Verses'

In D.G. Bowen (ed.), The Satanic Verses: Bradford Responds
Diker, UK: Bradford and Ilkley Community College, 1992, pp. 59—64.

According to this analysis, The Satanic Verses is about 'the translatability of the non-homogeneous, hybrid, impure self. . . . .'

#### BILGRAMI, Akeel

'Rushdie and the Reform of Islam'
Grand Street, 8/4 (Summer 1989), pp. 170-84.

Explains that since Islam has not undergone any 'Reformation', Muslims reacted so strongly to Rushdie's work.

#### ROFINIKTON, Minoo

'Salman Rushdie and Human Rights'
Echo of Islam (Tehran), 105 (March 1993), pp. 53-5.

Explains that Islamic law of apostasy and blasphemy should be appreciated in the light of the fact that Islam admits no distinction between religion and politics. Also deals with the differences in the Western and Islamic outlooks on human rights.

#### BOWEN, David G.

'Bradford and the Satanic Verses'

In: D.G. Bowen (ed.), The Satanic Verses: Bradford Responds likley, UK: Bradford and likley Community College, 1992, pp. 5–21.

Recounts the presence of Muslims in Bradford and the book-burning incident. Refers also to the subsequent damage to race relations and the vandalization of Muslim graves at Scholemoor cemetery. Also reports the seminars on the affairs in Bradford.

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Can Books Be Sacred?"

In D.G. Bowen (ed.), The Satanic Verses: Bradford Responds
Wey, UK: Bradford and Ilkley Community College, 1992, pp. 1–4.

Attempts to explain why Bradford Muslims, though from a book-respecting and book-treasuring culture, resorted to burning a copy of *The Satanic Verses*. Sets out also the aim and objectives of the seminars organized by Bradford and Ilkley Community College, which comprise this volume.

### 'He Who Loves Muhammad'

In D.G. Bowen (ed.), The Satanic Verses: Bradford Responds Ikley, UK: Bradford and Ikley Community College, 1992, pp. 22-7.

Explains Muslims' tremendous regard for the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and why Rushdie's lampooning of the Prophet hurt Muslims so badly.

### BUSSE, Herbert

'Some Marginal Notes to Salman Rushdie's "The Satanic Verses" Journal for Islamic Studies (Johannesburg), 10 (1990), pp. 141-4.

### COCKBURN, Alexander

'Beat the Devil'

The Nation (July 26-August 2, 1993), pp. 126-7.

Contains excerpts from Rushdie's statement condemning the 'God-driven mobs' of Turkey who had protested against the serialization of his novel in a Turkish newspaper. The government of Turkey had banned the novel in 1989. Criticizes Rushdie for not rising to support and defend the Turkish writer Aziz Nesin who had reproduced The Satanic Verses in the newspaper.

### CORCORAN, Marlena G.

'Salman Rushdie's Satanic Narration'

The Iowa Review, 20/1 (Winter 1990), pp. 155-67.

As a postmodernist novel The Satanic Verses is studied, especially its

DOSSA, Shiraz

Stanic Verses: Imagination and its Political Context'
Cross Currents: A Yearbook of Central European Culture, 39/2 (Summer 1989), pp. 204-12.

Focuses on the political discourse implicit in Rushdie's work.

EASTERMAN, Daniel

'Salman Rushdie and His Critics'

The Bookseller (London), 4517 (17th July 1992), pp. 168-9.

Discovers a great 'danger in the Muslim determination to have The Satanic Verses banned. 'Holds modern Islam guilty of perpetuating 'the bigotry of the past' and Muslim extremists of 'appalling outrages against humanity and decency'.

'Where Will the Extremism End?'

The Bookseller (London), (26th July 1991), pp. 236-7.

Ascribes the Muslim protest to a chauvinism among Muslims in that they put themselves above international law and justice.

FARUQI, M.H.

'Post-Modern Story With No Morals' Impact International (London), 21/3-4 (1991), pp. 29-30.

A with piece recounting Rushdie's career and motives in writing The

FENTON, James

'Keeping Up With Salman Rushdie' (Review Essay)
The New York Review of Books, 38/6 (1991), pp. 24–32.

HAQUE, Ekramul

'Anatomy of the Rushdie Affair. Blasphemy vs. Moral Choices'
The Message (Jamaica, NY), 8/1 (1989), pp. 7–9.

Documents the Muslim campaign in America. Detects 'uneasy alliance between Rushdie and his defenders in the British government' for 'a commonality of interests in defending the author's right to blaspheme Islam'.

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KAWIDI, Fahim

'Satanic Reflections'

Echo of Islam (Tehran), 105 (March 1993), pp. 56-8.

An Egyptian writer brands The Satanic Verses as an unparalleled work in obscenity and points to Rushdie's premeditated ploy in attacking Islam.

HULMES, Edward

'The Satanic Verses: A Test Case for Pluralism'

In D.G. Bowen (ed.), The Satanic Verses: Bradford Responds

Ikley, UK: Bradford and Ilkley Community College, 1992, pp. 45-50.

Holds that Rushdie's real target in the novel is corruption, not Islam. Calls for tolerance and reconciliation by both the author and Muslims.

RVING, T.B.

'The Rushdie Confrontation: A Clash in Values' The lowa Review, 20/1 (Winter 1990), pp. 175-84.

Condemns The Satanic Verses as an 'offensive work' smacking of 'utter poor taste'.

ISLAM, M. Rafiqul

'The Rushdie Affair: A Conflict of Rights'

BIIS Journal (Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies)

(Dhaka), 10/4 (1989), pp. 463-75.

Examines the work in the context of civilized behaviour and mutual respect. Disagrees with the fatwā and urges that lessons be learnt from the Affair.

JONES, Peter

'Rushdie, Race and Religion'

Political Studies - The Journal of the Political Studies Association of the UK (Oxford), 38/4 (1990), pp. 687-94.

Analyses Shabbir Akhtar's, Mashuq Ally's, Bhikhu Parekh's and Susan Mendus's responses to the Rushdie Affair. Examines the issues confronting the achievement of a harmonious but culturally diverse society.

'lunsprudential Sources' Decree on Apostasy' Echo of Islam (Tehran), 105 (March 1993), pp. 59-61.

Outlines the Islamic law of apostasy and its punishment as interpreted by different Islamic schools and underlines the unanimity of all schools on executing apostates such as Rushdie.

KHOSNOSHAHI, Seyed Hadi 'Satanic Verses: A New Trick from Satanic Circles' Echo of Islam (Tehran), 105 (March 1993), pp. 48-52.

The author's interview, pointing to the Zionist support in the publication and distribution of The Satanic Verses.

### KNONAGEL, Alex

'The Satanic Verses: Narrative Structure and Islamic Doctrine' International Fiction Review, 18/2 (1991), pp. 69-75.

Examines the narrative structure of The Satanic Verses in relation to the Islamic concept of literature.

#### LFE Simon

'Religion and the Law: Ways Forward' In: D.G. Bowen (ed.), The Satanic Verses: Bradford Responds likley, UK: Bradford and Ilkley Community College, 1992, pp. 73-8.

Observes that 'the powers-that-be continue to ignore the religious dimension to what is a multi-faith society' and affirms his belief in 'equal opportunity coupled with cultural diversity in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance'.

### LEWIS, Philip J.

'From Book Burning to Vigil: Bradford Muslims a Year On' In: D.G. Bowen (ed.), The Satanic Verses: Bradford Responds Ikley, UK: Bradford and Ilkley Community College, 1992, pp. 54-8.

A reprint of the article that appeared earlier in Discernment 4/2 (1990) dealing with the role of local Muslims and the Bishop in the campaign.

#### MANZOOR, S. Parvez

'Faith Beyond Fiction: The Struggle for a Post-Secularist Identity' (Review

Muslim World Book Review (Leicester, UK), 11/3 (1991), pp. 3-6.

A Review Article, though focusing on Sardar's and Davies's Distorted Imagination: Lessons from the Rushdie Affair (1990), studies the whole gamut of issues underlying the Affair.

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WEGAHED, Mohamed Salah Eldin

"Satanic Verses" Revisited: A Psychoanalytical Approach to the Juthor Salman Rushdie Through His Book' The Journal of IMA (Islamic Medical Association) (Downers Grove, IL), 11/2 (1990), pp. 51-5.

Apsychological study into Rushdie's motives.

MODOOD, Tariq

Religious Anger and Minority Rights' Political Quarterly (London), 60/3 (1989), pp. 280-4.

Criticizes the liberal-left branding the Muslim protest as Nazi behaviour. Discusses the issue of blasphemy in terms of race relations.

MOZAFFARI, Mehdi

The Rushdie Affair: Blasphemy as a New Form of International Conflict and Crisis' Terrorism and Political Violence (London), 2/3 (Autumn 1990), pp. 415-41.

Relates the Affair to the issue of international terrorism, especially in the wake of the farwa.

NARIMAN, Fali

'Freedom of Speech and Blasphemy - The Law in India and UK' The Review (International Commission of Jurists) (Geneva), No.42 (June 1989), pp. 53-6.

Recounts the history of blasphemy law in British India and in the UK, the former represents the latter's legacy.

#### NAZARETH, Peter

'Rushdie Wo/manichean Novel' The Iowa Review, 20/1 (Winter 1990), pp. 168-74.

Studies Rushdie's work in the perspective of Manichaeism and women studies.

### NEWELL, Stephanie

"The Other God: Salman Rushdie's "New" Aesthetic' Literature and History (Manchester), 1/2 (1992), pp. 67-87.

Perceives that the 'trial-by-fiction of the Qur'an undertaken by Rushdie has Western Orientalism at its roots', and holds Rushdie responsible for the Muslim response his novel has evoked.

### PAREKH, Bhikhu

'The Rushdie Affair: Research Agenda for Political Philosophy' Political Studies - The Journal of the Political Studies Association of the UK (Oxford), 38/4 (1990), pp. 695–709.

Studies part of The Satanic Verses and looks at the furore the work generated. However, it focuses on the larger issues raised by the Affair — status of the immigrant, equality before the law, communal libel and free speech.

### PARRINDER, Patrick

'Embracing Islam' (Review Essay)
London Review of Books. 13/7 (1991), pp. 18-19.

An account of Rushdie's embracing of Islam.

#### POULTER, Sebastian

'Towards Legislative Reform of the Blasphemy and Racial Hatred Laws'

Public Law (Autumn 1991), pp. 371-85.

Advances several arguments for reform of the blasphemy and racial hatred laws and an impressive set of proposals for legislative reform.

### ROBINSON, Neal

Reflections on the Rushdie Affair – 18 April 1989' In: D.G. Bowen (ed.), *The Satanic Verses: Bradford Responds* Ikley, UK: Bradford and Ilkley Community College, 1992, pp. 33–44.

Detects in the British media response the reactivation of the 'age-old European fears and prejudices concerning Islam'. Discusses also 'radical Islam' but holds that the British Muslims 'do not belong to radical movements'. Acknowledges the offensiveness of Rushdie's work.

### SAMAD, Yunas

'Book Burning and Race Relations: Political Mobilisation of Bradford Muslims'

New Community (Coventry, UK), 18/4 (1992), pp. 507-20.

Underlines the response of Bradford Muslims and points to the factors behind it.

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SDDIQUI, Kalim
Riasphemers Must Die'

he Spectator (London), 265/8463 (1990), pp. 18–20.

In his interview with John Mortimer, Siddiqui expresses his support for Rushdie's death sentence.

SMAMWE, Saadi A.

Rushdie's The Satanic Verses and Heretical Literature in Islam' The lowa Review, 20/1 (Winter 1990), pp. 185-98.

Traces the history of satiric and heretic literature in Islamic tradition.

### WEBSTER, Richard

'A 20th Century Crusade'

The Bookseller (London), 4516 (July 1992), pp. 98-100.

Observes the 'shadow of the crusades' in Islam-baiting of the Western liberals and media and notes the damage to race relations as a result of the Affair. Regrets 'the extraordinary confusion which Western intellectuals have allowed to develop over the whole issue of free speech'.

### WEISS, Philip

'The Martyr'

Esquire (January 1993), pp. 71-6 and 117-18.

Recounts in rich detail the exploits of Rushdie as a hon vivant in his post-fatwā life and how he revels in attention. Full of insights into Rushdie's character and conduct.

WESKER, Arnold, VERMA, Jatinder and SWIFT, Graham 'Dear Salman'

New Humanist (London), 107/1 (1992), pp. 2-3.

Contains letters of support from these writers to Rushdie on the third anniversary of the fatwā.

'What Rushdie Has Written'

International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society (New York), 4/3 (Spring 1991), pp. 373-85.

Sets out the themes of self-hatred, rage and blasphemy in Rushdie's works. Suggests three practical avenues to solve the problem: (1) Head of the Islamic Republic of Iran lifts the fatwā, (2) Rushdie mends fences, and (3) Muslims overlook Rushdie in the tradition of tolerance.

WRIGHT, Theodore P. Jr.

The Rushdie Controversy: The Spread of Communalism From South Asia

Plural Societies, 20/3 (December 1990), pp. 31-40.

Attributes the British Muslim reaction to The Satanic Verses to their South Asian minority complex and migrant origin. They perceive assimilation as a great threat to Islam hence their sensitive, over-protective response.

American Authors' Guild, 390 Abbāsah, 139 American Psycho, 40 Abdullah, Omer Bin, 245 Abraham (Prophet), 28, 104, 170, 177, 190, 194, 209, 318, 327, 335 Abū Dāwūd, 137 Abu Jihad, 265 Aburish, Said, 230 Abu Simbel, 62, 145, 149 Abu Sufyan, 149, 335 Abyssinia, 133, 134, 137, 177 Adam, Gerry, 163 Afghanistan, 302 Africa, 155, 170, 219, 220 Africa Events, 312, 313 African Affairs, 220 The Africans: A Triple Heritage, 218, 219, 220 Ahmad, Akbar S., 22, 49 Ahmad, Khurshid, 189 Ahmad, Mirza Ghulam, 302 Ahmad, Safir, 230 Ahmad, Syed Faiyazuddin, 336 Ahsan, Manazir M., 131, 155, 156, 282, 309, 336, 371, 379, 388 Aitken, Jan. 82 Ajami, Fuad, 230 Ajami, Fuda, 234, Ajeeb, Mohammad, 109 Akhtar, Shabbir, 36, 39, 109, 251, 274, 297, 300, 303, 304, 309 Ali, Tariq, 35, 243, 298 Algabid, Hamid, 370 Algabid, Hamid, 370
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